

# Ensuring Access to Excellence for ALL Young Children



New York  
Early Childhood  
Professional  
Development  
Institute



2016  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

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## FROM NEW YORK CITY TO THE NATION

*Housed at the City University of New York (CUNY), the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute shares CUNY's commitment to equitable access and social justice while benefitting from the in-kind support that CUNY's considerable infrastructure provides. The Institute is part of the Office of Academic Affairs' efforts to develop and implement city-wide initiatives aimed at raising academic quality, improving student success, and providing equal access to quality education. CUNY's support allows the Institute to apply 91% of every dollar raised directly to programs, projects, and services.*

*The scope of the Institute expands far beyond New York City. The Institute works to address unmet need, inspire innovation, shift policy, and build systems throughout New York State and serves as a resource to others around the country.*



Dear Colleagues,

We all know that the first years of a child's life are pivotal. When young children are protected, nurtured, and stimulated they have a better chance of thriving in childhood and securing healthy and productive futures.

Research shows it, and so do the life experiences of those around us. That's why ensuring access to excellence for ALL young children is more than just a goal for the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute — it's a mantra and a way of life.

We also know that when you get right down to it, people are what make the difference for young children. Our work is centered around those people who are engaged in the work of early childhood. Of course, this includes teachers in early childhood settings, but we also recognize that there is a much wider spectrum of people who influence young children's lives: from administrators who oversee programs, to policymakers, to custodians who maintain a healthy environment, to nutritionists, social workers, medical

professionals, librarians, home visitors and others—anyone and everyone who contributes to a child's early development.

Creating and supporting a professional and committed workforce with multiple players means that we must rely on our own team of dedicated professionals. The 85 people who make up the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute work tirelessly, all across the state. On a typical day, we might train nearly 4,000 preschool teachers, provide career counseling and resumé coaching, convene researchers, develop strategies to increase participation in the **QUALITYstarsNY** rating system, and advocate for better policy. Every member of our full- and part-time staff demonstrates creativity, energy, intellect, tenacity, patience, passion, and good humor in doing this work. Their drive comes from knowing that young children are going to thrive if we do our work well.

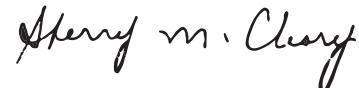
Throughout this report, you will see that the components of our work intersect with each other. We build systems, we innovate, experiment with, and evaluate new paradigms – all the time with an eye towards implementation, and then

we support policy change. This diversity of impact comes from our focus on and deployment of a diverse and talented range of people.

Young children in New York and across the country need and deserve the best start possible in their early years. And they rely on adults in myriad roles to provide the nurturing support that is critical to a lifetime of health, happiness, participation, and productivity. Our goal is to support everyone who engages in the early childhood workforce and value them as the professionals they are. On behalf of our own professional team, I want to thank you— for engaging in such meaningful partnership, supporting our every move, and helping us to ensure that every young child in New York has access to excellence.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherry M. Cleary".

Sherry M. Cleary, Executive Director



# NEW YORK EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE: Ensuring Access to Excellence for ALL Young Children



ALL children have the innate capacity to succeed. Research tells us that children are born learning. How well they learn in the early years sets the stage for the rest of their lives. And how well they learn depends on the quality of their early childhood experiences. That's why excellence in early childhood is so vitally important for children. Research shows that one of the most important ways to improve the quality of early childhood is through an exemplary workforce. Children who spend their most formative years (birth through age eight) in high quality early learning settings, who are taught by highly qualified educators and who receive high quality services in school, at home, and in their communities are better prepared for school and life.

The Institute works with early childhood organizations around the country to create and enhance comprehensive early childhood systems.

*The New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute is one of the nation's premier resources for the early childhood profession, translating proven approaches and research into policy and practice to create a comprehensive system for teachers, directors, administrators, policy leaders, funders, and other individuals who want to create an exemplary and well-compensated early childhood workforce.*

*"The Institute has always been recognized as a thought leader for early childhood policy and practice. For years, it has incubated programs and approaches in New York that are models for the nation. More recently, it has emerged as a leader for the early childhood field across the country. Given NAEYC's intensive focus on advancing the early childhood profession, we are grateful to the Institute for its contributions of the best of what it is learning from research and practice to help shape a high quality workforce."*

RHIAN EVANS ALLVIN, CEO, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NAEYC)

Ultimately, the work of the Institute strives to:

- Recruit and retain a talented workforce
- Establish and maintain competency-based teacher education programs
- Develop a strong workforce development system
- Set standards for quality rating and improvement systems
- Create equitable funding initiatives

Research shows that young children benefit when the adults in their lives are engaged, informed, and healthy. Investing in the early childhood workforce is the best way to spend public and private funds to achieve positive and long-lasting child outcomes.

## WHO MAKES UP THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE?

While educators immediately come to mind when one considers the early childhood workforce, the Institute recognizes that there are many other adults who play critical roles in the educational experiences and services that shape the lives of young children. The Institute intentionally looks for ways to enhance excellence not only among educators, but also among administrators, social workers, health care providers, librarians, policy-makers, and others who have an influence on the lives of young children.



*The Institute's distinct approach seeks to integrate these components across each project to ensure sustainable change and scalability.*

# APPLYING RESEARCH TO ENHANCE EXCELLENCE

Through applied research strategies, the Institute analyzes barriers across different early childhood disciplines, locations and professions that stand in the way of delivering exceptional services to young children in New York State and across the country. In 2016, the Institute added a Director of Research and Evaluation to strengthen each project's ability to evaluate its performance and impact. Projects have an evaluation component to ensure the best use of every dollar raised and of course, to maximize outcomes. Two of the Institute's flagship efforts in this area are the creation and evaluation of QUALITYstarsNY and the NYC Early Childhood Research Network.



**“QUALITYstarsNY has very high standards, tackles some of the toughest measures of quality, and does so in high-need communities. That makes these results all the more impressive and highlights the potential for improving early childhood programs on a broader basis throughout the state.”**

SHERRY CLEARY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW YORK EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE



**QUALITYstarsNY**  
a winning beginning for all our children™

## New York State's Bold Step to Ensure Access to Excellence in Early Childhood Education

A REPORT ON THE FIRST THREE YEARS FEBRUARY 2016

QUALITYstarsNY is a voluntary quality improvement and rating system for all types of regulated early childhood programs in New York State that serve children from birth through age five. QUALITYstarsNY uses research-based, culturally responsive program standards developed by New York's leading early education experts to support programs to provide children with high quality early learning experiences.

**Q**UALITYstarsNY is a five-star rating and quality improvement system, with five stars representing the highest quality. Each participating program receives a rating determined by a points-based assessment process. Applicants receive points for meeting standards in four categories: Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Qualifications and Experience, and Management and Leadership.

QUALITYstarsNY developed the set of standards for three types of early childhood programs: centers, public schools, and family providers (also known as in-home providers). The standards were created to define and describe best practices in early childhood settings and to guide programs in meeting and exceeding these standards. Equally important, QUALITYstarsNY also provides quality improvement tools and supports to assist programs in addressing the needs identified in the assessment process.

The QUALITYstarsNY process was created in order to provide children with high quality learning experiences that promote positive child outcomes and to ensure that even the most disadvantaged young children have access to high-performing programs, a strategy known to mitigate the achievement gap. The results of an analysis of the progress programs have made in the first three years show that programs have made dramatic progress and have reached significantly higher levels of quality. This report presents the findings of that evaluation. Figure 1, on the following page, shows the results of quality star ratings conducted for 196 programs in 2013 and again in 2015.

Due to funding constraints, the programs currently enrolled in QUALITYstarsNY represent less than three percent of all early childhood programs in New York. To achieve the greatest impact, the QUALITYstarsNY program must grow in order to be able to

recruit new participants, including those with serious challenges to health and safety, further engage underserved regions, work with programs connected with pre-K expansion, and deepen its impact in current QUALITYstarsNY communities.

The NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council is the driving force behind QUALITYstarsNY. In the past year, New York State funding stabilized the project and allowed it to serve almost 200 more programs in 2015. Currently, State funds flow through the New York State Education Department. An increase in funds has been requested over the next five years in order to expand QUALITYstarsNY coverage to thousands more children, families, and providers across the state.

| KEY FINDINGS   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Quality Improvements</b>                              |   |
| 84% statewide improvement in Learning Environment scores | 44% of all programs increased their star rating         |
| 31% statewide improvement in Family Engagement scores    | 65% increase in programs earning four and five stars    |
| 31% improvement in Qualifications and Experience scores  | 12% improvement in Qualifications and Experience scores |
| 31% improvement in Management and Leadership scores      | 31% improvement in Management and Leadership scores     |

In February 2016, the Institute produced a three-year report on the impact QUALITYstarsNY has had on early childhood education. The outcomes were significant and showed an increase in the excellence of teaching and programs delivered to New York's children.

### Findings included:

- 84% of programs increased the total number of points scored on quality standards
- 34% statewide improvement in Learning Environment scores
- 31% statewide improvement in Family Engagement scores
- 44% of all programs increased their star rating
- 65% increase in programs earning four and five stars
- 12% improvement in Qualifications and Experience scores
- 31% improvement in Management and Leadership scores

As a result of these findings, the Governor's office allocated a \$2 million increase in funding for QUALITYstarsNY for the 2016-17 fiscal year. QUALITYstarsNY also supports Pre-K programs in four communities across New York State as part of the federal Preschool Expansion Grant program.



## The NYC Early Childhood **RESEARCH** Network

The Institute convenes and helped to set the framework for the NYC Early Childhood Research Network, which was established in 2016 at the request of the Foundation for Child Development. The initial goal is to bring university researchers together with representatives from New York City public agencies to fund research projects that examine the early care and education workforce in New York City's universal prekindergarten (UPK) programs. The Institute's director of research and evaluation facilitates the network.

Working with postsecondary educators and education researchers within universities in New York and New Jersey, the Network set a rich research agenda in the early childhood field and provided the vehicle to award millions of research dollars to proposals that will increase knowledge about high-quality early childhood education everywhere. The Foundation for Child Development, working with the Network and New York City agencies, awarded more than \$3 million to seven different research projects.

## The Network funded the following SEVEN STUDIES in 2016:

- 1** Bank Street College of Education and the National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. Purpose: Examination of leadership capacity and an exploration of what center and public school instructional leaders do to support teaching staff and foster high-quality instruction in UPK classrooms.
- 2** Borough of Manhattan Community College (CUNY). Purpose: A study of the recruitment, retention, professional development, and mentoring of male educators in the implementation of the UPK system.
- 3** City College of New York (CUNY) and Teachers College, Columbia University. Purpose: Investigation of high-quality instructional and family involvement practices that are responsive to families from low-income, immigrant, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds in the UPK system.
- 4** Hunter College of the City University of New York (CUNY). Purpose: Investigation of the ways in which teaching staff involved in curricula planning find and use formative child assessment tools tied to specific curricula to support their pedagogical decision-making in daily practice and curricula implementation.

**5** National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University. Purpose: A comparison of teacher characteristics, professional development supports, instructional approaches, and program structures across UPK settings, governance structures, and communities.

**6** New York University, Institute of Human Development and Social Change. Purpose: A study of how teachers with different levels of teacher qualifications are distributed across UPK classrooms and an examination of ways that administrators and teachers understand and use data about classroom quality to inform professional development and classroom practice.

**7** Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, National Institute for Early Education Research. Purpose: Identification of the professionals within the current coaching workforce system who are working within UPK programs; an examination of how these support professionals use their time; and an exploration of how they perceive their roles as influencers of early care and education.

*"The Institute is well known for its policy work, but the level of research it generates, in partnership with others, to inform the field is important. In the case of the NYC Early Childhood Research Network, the Institute brings partners together to develop the research agenda for the early childhood education workforce as part of universal Pre-K. It will then take those research findings and recommend policy to put standards in place that providers can use in their practice."*

SARA VECCHIOTTI, CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER FOR THE FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT



# ENHANCING PRACTICE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Children and families are at the heart of the Institute's work with professionals. From college students to public school teachers to program leaders to informal providers, the Institute addresses the needs of the early childhood workforce and the children they serve in settings across the state of New York and across the country. The Institute translates research and policy into everyday practice and is a resource to help early childhood professionals improve their skills and knowledge so they can provide exemplary care and education for young children.

The Institute acts as an implementing agency for a variety of practice-focused initiatives, such as *New York Works for Children* and The Aspire Registry, the Informal Family Child Care Project, the Career Development Services Center, college credit-bearing credential programs, coaching, professional development, and QUALITYstarsNY. This work is done in partnership with New York City and State agencies and other organizations.



Introduce children  
to more complicated  
& Varied feelings  
Including positive &  
neutral terms.

Use pre & post  
portraits  
various  
states

## INFORMAL FAMILY CHILD CARE PROJECT

The Institute recognizes that not all child care is offered in a center or program-based setting. In New York City, up to 16,000 children are being cared for in licensed-exempt homes. Families often choose to use informal settings for their children where child care is provided by families, friends, or neighbors. This informal family child care offers flexible hours that help families accommodate non-traditional work schedules. In addition, the child's native language is often spoken in these settings, which can help children thrive as they meet critical developmental and learning milestones. Home-based and family child care providers should have access to the same core body of knowledge about child development as their center-based counterparts.

The Institute developed and currently staffs the Informal Family Child Care Project (IFCC),

which was established to assess and address the needs of informal (license-exempt) child care providers who receive subsidies from New York City's Administration for Children's Services to provide care. The IFCC offers a wide range of programs and services, including training, technical assistance, home visits, and access to materials and resources that support best practices for children and families. The IFCC team at the Institute continues to expand their reach to providers across the city to create connections between child care providers and other community resources, including libraries, museums, parks, and early literacy programs. IFCC also has expanded its scope to welcome licensed home-based providers to the myriad of professional development programs offered.

*"I used to think that once a child was in my care, they had to adapt to me and my way. But I learned [at the IFCC trainings] that I have to accommodate different needs for children and parents and to have an open mind."*

SHARON, CHILD CARE PROVIDER, BROOKLYN, NY



### IFCC BY THE NUMBERS

Increased rigor for professional development and training for more than 730 providers in 2016.

Responded to more than 10,000 inquiries for information and assistance through the Institute's staffed technical assistance phone line – up from 8,000 inquiries in 2015.



## NEW YORK WORKS FOR CHILDREN and THE ASPIRE REGISTRY

The Institute continues to play a critical role in the development and implementation of *New York Works For Children*, the state's system of interrelated programs, services, and efforts to build and sustain an effective, committed, early childhood and school-age workforce. Originally an initiative of the New York Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), *New York Works for Children* was launched in 2010 with key partners that include the Institute, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the federal Child Care and Development Fund, the New York State Education Department, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Department of Education, and others, including the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children.

### ASPIRE REGISTRY BY THE NUMBERS



Total number of active organization accounts – a 30% increase from 2015



Total individual account profiles: - a 30% increase from 2015



6 Day average for processing registry requests, whereas the national average is six weeks.

New York Works for Children established an infrastructure that enables New York to take a comprehensive approach to how the early childhood workforce is created and supported. It provides intentional career development pathways, helpful tools and resources about core knowledge and competencies needed to work with children and families, and access to expert knowledge and professional development from certified trainers that align with state QUALITYstarsNY standards. The Institute staffs *New York Works for Children* and its flagship service: The Aspire Registry.

The Aspire Registry is New York State's workforce database and statewide training calendar for early childhood and school-age professionals. Teachers, providers, directors, trainers, and anyone who works with children can use the Aspire Registry to keep track of important information about their careers, including education and employment history, as well as find professional development opportunities. In addition,

child care regulating agencies will soon be able to use the Aspire Registry to monitor compliance and track the required training and education for early childhood staff. This helps to ensure that government funds are spent both efficiently and effectively.

Before the Aspire Registry, there were few parameters around coaching and training for early childhood teachers. Now, as a result of the work of the Institute and its partners, trainers and coaches must be certified, teachers have more opportunities to engage in professional development that is tailored to their strengths and areas of opportunities, and educators are held accountable through study plans. All of this means higher quality early learning for children and ensures that the next generation of early childhood professionals learn best practices and can translate those into exemplary teaching and meaningful early childhood experiences with lasting impacts.



*“The Institute is a source of empowerment for me. I’m empowered to be a better administrator for my staff with the information I have at my fingertips with the Aspire Registry,”*

GEM MORIAH

## GEM MORIAH *Director, B’Above, New York*

Gem Moriah looks to The New York Early Childhood Education Professional Development Institute as both a student of early childhood and as an early childhood director whose staff have benefitted from the Institute’s training since 2009. Gem uses the Aspire Registry in her work as the director of an early childhood program with a mission to provide each child it serves in New York with a safe, loving family and the tools they need to thrive in school and life. The Aspire Registry provides

her with quick access to staff credentials, to scheduling training, and to managing credentials for staff who have completed training. As a student herself, the Aspire Registry allows Gem to set goals for her career because it contains a career ladder that is linked to qualifications

Gem credits the Institute with elevating the role of the profession in New York. “The perception is that we are important. Before, we were just people who would keep

kids safe. Now we are thought of as people who have a curriculum and that everything we do is linked to the core body of knowledge to develop the skills we need,” she said. “The perception also is that everyone is capable of growth in the early childhood field, and because of our professional growth, the quality of education for our children improves.”

## WHAT IS QUALITYstarsNY?

It is New York's voluntary quality rating and improvement system for all regulated early childhood programs that serve children from birth through age five. The system uses research-based, culturally responsive program standards developed by New York's leading early education experts to ensure that programs provide children with access to excellent early learning experiences.

Early childhood programs in centers, schools, and child care homes across New York participate in QUALITYstarsNY. Based on a comprehensive assessment process, programs set quality improvement goals with support from early childhood specialists. The programs gain access to resources to improve their physical space, to develop their education and business practices, and to access professional development opportunities. QUALITYstarsNY dedicates considerable resources in support of staff who need to earn degrees and credentials, which elevates the early childhood profession and its quality.



*"QUALITYstarsNY has provided us with another way to assess what we do, make improvements, and give feedback to the state about the process. Working with a consultant has proven to be invaluable, especially when combined with funding for materials and staff training through Quality Scholars."*

BARBARA STONE REDEN, MEd; DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES, JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF GREATER BUFFALO.



## QUALITYstarsNY

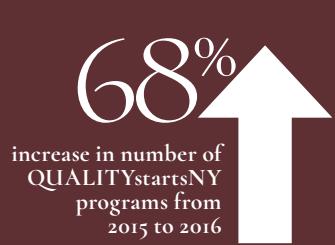
Throughout the development of QUALITYstarsNY, the state's quality rating and improvement system, the Institute worked with stakeholders to raise the bar on quality standards to create an exemplary early childhood workforce and improve the early childhood experience. The Institute continues to help teachers, directors, and early childhood administrators gain knowledge and credentials, and increase the number of providers becoming and maintaining their participation in QUALITYstarsNY. QUALITYstarsNY is known for its comprehensive approach and focuses its attention on the quality of family engagement, leadership and management, the learning environment, and staff qualifications and experience. All regulated early childhood programs, including child care, Pre-K, Head Start, and family child care, are eligible to participate.

The data systems that support QUALITYstarsNY are sophisticated and help to ensure that progress is monitored consistently and with great attention to detail, protecting public investment.

Due to funding constraints, QUALITYstarsNY serves fewer than 3% of all providers in New York State. The Institute is working tirelessly to increase the number of participating programs by informing decision makers and funders about the benefits of a quality improvement system so that more children can benefit from exemplary early childhood experiences.



### 2016 QUALITYstarsNY BY THE NUMBERS





## CAREER SERVICES, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Institute supports those wanting to enter the field of early childhood education and those looking to change positions and grow their careers within the field through the Career Development Services Center. This work was initiated by a comprehensive needs assessment conducted in the Institute's first years. Staffed by the Institute, the Center provides free, comprehensive career counseling and support to current and aspiring early childhood professionals.

This includes:

- Career planning and advising
- Preparation for teaching certification exams
- Career and vocational assessments
- Resumé prep, job search, and interview strategies

In 2016, the Center provided direct professional development and higher education support to nonprofit providers in all five boroughs of New York City.

The Institute continues to work with CUNY's School of Professional Studies to offer a 12-credit certificate that leads to the Child Development Associate Credential (for those entering the early childhood education field)

and a graduate-level course of study that leads to the New York State Children's Program Administrator Credential (for directors and teachers who want to become program directors).

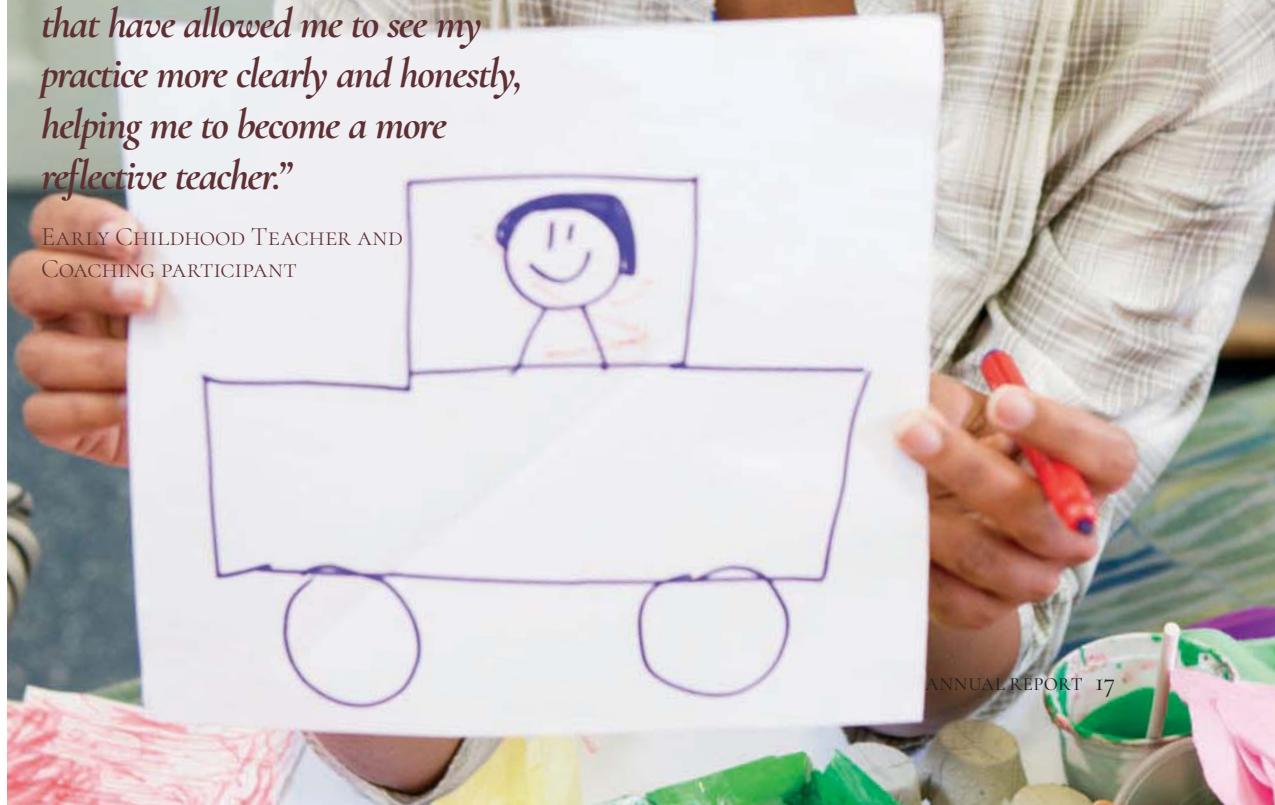
In response to the need for early childhood coaching support, the Institute created a team of highly qualified and specialized coaches in 2015 and continued the work in 2016. The Institute's team of master coaches used the NYS Coaching Competencies to guide their work with early childhood center directors, teachers and assistant teachers across a broad range of the city's birth to five programs to create effective changes in practice.

## 2016 CAREER SERVICES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY THE NUMBERS

- Individual career advising: **110** individuals seeking to enter or move up in the field of early childhood
- Test preparation and Pre-K Teaching Scholars: **300** received preparation and **172** earned certification
- Outreach and networking: more than **2,500** professionals reached
- Technical assistance: more than **2,700** early childhood professionals and those looking to enter the field served
- During the 2015-16 school year, **77** students obtained CDA college credits, and **30** students completed their credential.
- Last year, nearly 200 early childhood teachers, directors, and leaders who serve **1,920** children in the five boroughs of New York City received **978** hours of coaching – and the numbers continue to grow.

*[My coach] Sarah has effectively guided and supported me through a difficult start to the year with so much skill. She has helped me to understand the greater purposes behind my choices, which has led to greater confidence and follow through on my part, or to me making different, well-informed decisions. She has pointed out many things that are working and some that are not, in ways that have allowed me to see my practice more clearly and honestly, helping me to become a more reflective teacher.”*

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AND COACHING PARTICIPANT





## STRONG PARTNERSHIPS MAKE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONALS

The Institute relies on partnerships with public agencies and non-profit organizations, including the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the State Education Department, the New York City Administration for Children's Services, and the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, as well as the New York Public Library and the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children.

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) and the Institute also have a long-standing partnership. The NYC DOE was one of the founding partners who helped establish and support the Institute, including the endorsement of QUALITYstarsNY at its inception. In fact, the NYC DOE served as one of several lead agencies for QUALITYstarsNY during the field test and early program recruitment. The NYC DOE continues to look to the Institute to provide support, guidance, and professional development for its early childhood programs.

Since 2014, the Institute has worked closely with the NYC DOE in support of the Pre-K expansion, to prepare teachers and programs to serve 70,000 four-year olds. The Institute:

- Operated the Pre-K Scholars program, in which participants earned their master's degree in early childhood education as well as the state's Birth to Grade 2 teacher certification;
- Provided professional development to 800 directors and principals and 4,000 teachers on linking observation and assessment to instruction, which guided Pre-K staff to use a wide range of child- and family-centered information to tailor their program and curriculum to suit the four-year-old children in their programs.
- Provided coaching to teachers and directors/principals in Pre-K classrooms and programs
- Delivered tutoring and test prep services to help teachers to obtain the college credits and pass the certification exams needed to become certified (a requirement to teach in a Pre-K for All classroom).
- Used the Aspire Registry to provide the NYC DOE with detailed status reports on the workforce in NYC DOE-funded classrooms and programs.
- Began operating Screening and Authentic Assessment Support (SAS) for the Pre-K for All program. Six specialists tracked the progress of more than 68,000 individual authentic assessment licenses at 1,881 sites and ensured that every eligible Pre-K student in New York City received a developmental screening in their home language.

The Institute recognizes that other professionals who work with young children also need support in their professional development and partnerships are fundamental to this work. In 2016, the New York Public Library requested the Institute's expertise and support in the design, development, and evaluation of a project, *Raising the Bar: Integrating Early Childhood Education Training into Librarian Professional Development*, to provide professional development to their children's librarians. This four-part series, which integrates on-line and in-person professional learning, empowers children's librarians to engage families as their children's first teachers. The Institute is collaborating with the Library's early literacy team to create a curriculum and professional learning series to be shared with colleagues across the country.



# SHAPING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy is a powerful tool for shaping standards of excellence in the early childhood workforce and for creating communities in which children and families can thrive. The Institute works with state and local government to translate best practices and research into effective public policies for all sectors and services that impact the lives of young children, including public health, economics, housing, workforce development, criminal justice, mental health, and education.





## 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

**State Budget:** The Institute's 2016 report, *QUALITYstarsNY: New York State's Bold Step to Ensure Access to Excellence in Early Childhood Education*, showed that participating programs improved their quality across the board. The Institute shared the report with the Governor's office and other elected officials in the New York State Senate and Assembly, the New York City Office of the Mayor, the New York City Council, and city agencies, as well as representatives from other government agencies, nonprofit providers, schools, and policy and advocacy organizations. The Institute also organized *QUALITYstarsNY* program visits for elected officials. As a result of the report and outreach, the program received a \$2-million increase in funding for *QUALITYstarsNY* in the 2016-17 fiscal year.

**Start with Stars:** The new allocation enabled the Institute to implement "Start with Stars" in 2016. The initiative supports programs that are just starting the journey to meet the *QUALITYstarsNY* standards and find themselves needing support to come into compliance with basic regulations. The goal of the initiative is to expedite the increase in the number of programs that meet basic health and safety regulations so they become eligible for participation in *QUALITYstarsNY* and move towards providing high-quality early childhood education experiences to young children.



**Coaching:** The Institute worked with its statewide partners to create the NYS Coaching Competencies. This critical step helped to create a new occupation in New York that is tied to the early childhood career ladder and provides an opportunity for early childhood professionals to realize a significant increase in earning capacity (the average salary for a coach is \$70,000). The team collected qualitative data on the use and impact of the competencies in anticipation of developing the NYS Coaching Credential, a process that began in November 2016.

In 2016, the state officially recognized coaching as a valid form of professional development for early childhood educators. Coaching is a valuable tool to those in the profession who want to improve their teaching. A coach works one-on-one with individuals, helping them improve their practice using a strengths-based approach tailored to each teacher and leader. Coaches have deep expertise to support the diverse profession and find that the needs vary from person to person. One teacher might need help with curriculum and behavior management. A director may need support in managing staff. Through the Aspire Registry, the Institute works to track the amount and type of coaching received and ensure coaches are credentialed.



**The Aspire Registry:** The New York City Board of Health voted to change policy to require professionals who work with young children in licensed programs to use the Aspire Registry to keep track of essential information about their careers, including training and professional development. This new regulation will provide the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene with significant tools to more efficiently monitor compliance.

In 2016, The Aspire Registry also worked with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to pilot a new streamlined process for file review of documentation for licensed programs. Regulators were provided with training and access to Aspire reports for all rated QUALITYstarsNY programs, and given the opportunity to use these reports to complete remote file reviews at the time of mid-point or license renewal.

**Early Childhood Advisory Council:** The New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) provides thought leadership on issues related to young children and their families. The Institute's Executive Director, Sherry Cleary, serves as ECAC co-chair. The ECAC's vision is to ensure that all young children are healthy, learning and thriving in families that are supported by a full complement of services and resources essential for successful development. The ECAC is comprised of experts in education, health care, child welfare and mental health. Members are appointed by the Governor and represent state and local agencies, advocacy groups, foundations, higher education, unions and other key organizations concerned with the well-being of young children and their families. In 2016, the ECAC was codified as part of the New York Social Services Law, and ECAC released a strategic plan that set

goals, actions and strategies to guide its work in four focus areas: strong families, healthy children, early learning, and coordinated and responsive systems.

**CUNY Early Childhood Higher Education Working Group:** In 2016, CUNY Chancellor J. B. Milliken asked the Institute's Executive Director to convene a group of CUNY's early childhood faculty to envision the future of early childhood higher education. The group of 12 Institute staff and CUNY faculty members met for six months and generated 11 recommendations focused on innovation and meeting the needs of the early childhood workforce in New York City. A working paper was written and will be released in the coming year.

## DR. APRIL WHATLEY BEDFORD *Dean, School of Education, Brooklyn College*

Dr. Bedford has spent her professional career educating professionals who teach our youngest learners. After Dr. Bedford had become Dean of the School of Education at Brooklyn College, the Institute approached her about joining a CUNY Early Childhood Education Working Group, where she could share ideas with other early childhood faculty members from other colleges. She jumped at the chance.

"I hadn't met with early childhood faculty from other colleges. Now, we are a cohesive group

who comes together to dream about what early childhood education would look like," Dr. Bedford said. "We make recommendations on the future of early childhood education in New York and identify opportunities to strengthen early childhood education across the CUNY system."

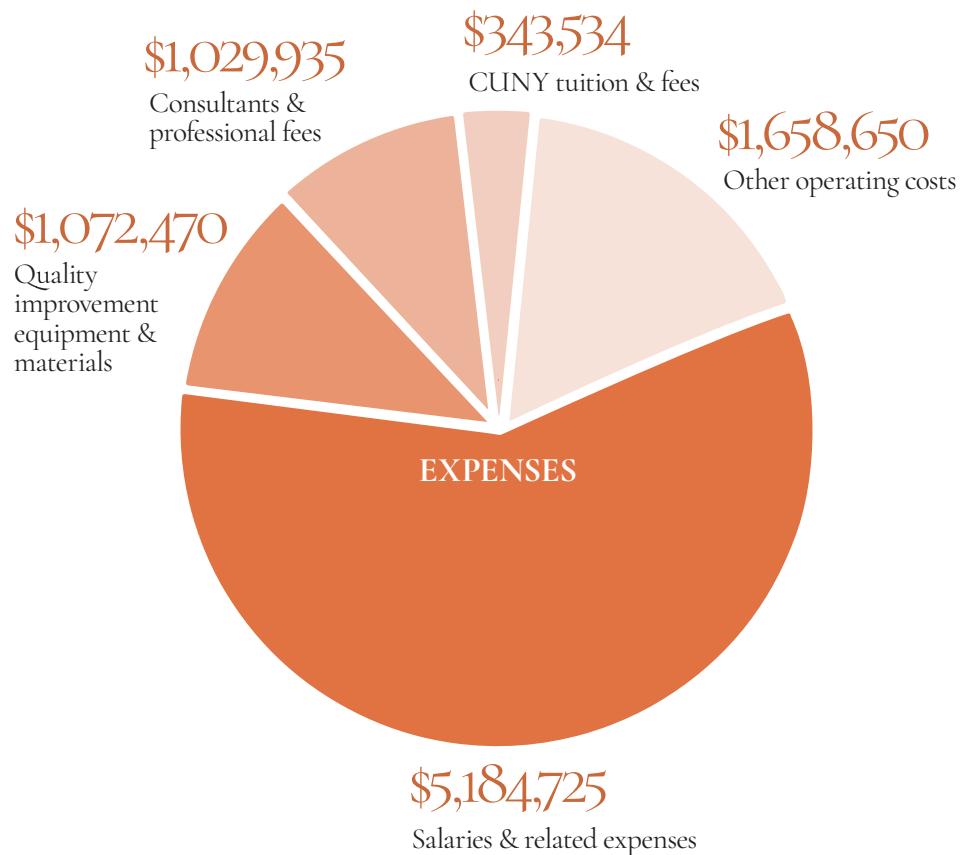
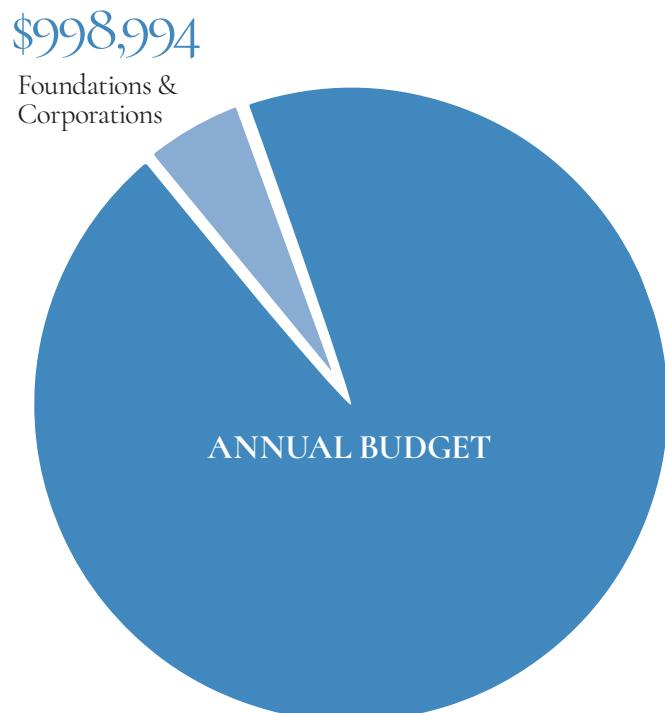
Dr. Bedford serves as co-chair, alongside Institute Executive Director Sherry Cleary, of the CUNY Early Childhood Education Working Group, which is comprised of faculty from each of the CUNY colleges that have an early childhood program. They

met monthly, and their ideas formed the basis of a report on early childhood higher education in New York. As a result of that report, the CUNY Chancellor included a specific section on early childhood education in the CUNY Strategic Framework for the first time.

"To the credit of the Institute, the perception of early childhood education has been elevated, and more people realize the importance of including professional standards in curriculum and public policy," Dr. Bedford said.

# 2016 FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

The New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute is funded by a combination of city and state government contracts (89% of the annual budget) and through private grants and fees for services.



# THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

The Institute is grateful to all the partners, supporters, and vendors that make it possible to support, expand and improve the early childhood workforce and enhance access to excellence for New York's children.

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- Early Care and Education Consortium
- New York Center for Child Development
- New York City Administration for Children's Services

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- New York City Office of the Mayor
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- New York State Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators
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- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Education

## PATTI LIEBERMAN, *Chair, Child Care and Early Education Fund, Trustee, A.L. Mailman Family Foundation, Inc.*

Early childhood education has long been close to Patti Lieberman's heart. As a trustee for the A.L. Mailman Family Foundation, Inc., she helps direct national giving to systems and policies that impact young children and their families. In her work at the Child Care and Early Education Fund, she helped to establish the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute in 2005. She says that both organizations fund the Institute to help improve the profession and improve the quality of early education.

"The Institute has had an enormous impact helping to professionalize directors, coaching, and helping more teachers earn their qualifications and be ready to

work," Patti says. "Before the Institute, training wasn't formalized. Anyone could be an early childhood education trainer or offer a workshop. Teachers would take the same training over and over, and the trainings and credits became meaningless."

Patti credits the Institute with changing the perception of the early childhood profession in New York by making sure trainers were qualified, and training followed a formalized curriculum. "Now, there is a workforce moving in a positive direction and what they do matters. Early childhood professionals are more valued because of the Institute's work."

# 2016 INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

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