



## Strengthening the Pre-K Investment

Next Steps to a  
Winning Beginning  
for Every Child in  
New York State

Winning Beginning  NY

*an early care and learning coalition*

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# Strengthening the Pre-K Investment: Next Steps to a Winning Beginning for Every Child in New York State

The state's Universal Prekindergarten initiative represented a bold departure from previous early childhood policies, calling for universal access and new funding. As New York's largest single investment of its own revenues in early learning and development, it's time to build on this success.



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The early years are critical to preparing children for success in school and beyond.

In 1997, New York State lawmakers passed the Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) legislation, a bold new approach to early childhood education. It established new part-day Pre-K programs that were free and open to all four-year-olds. Today, the state invests \$414 million annually in Pre-K, which serves more than 100,000 children in public schools and community settings.

In addition to calling for universal access, the landmark legislation called for services to foster social, emotional and physical development along with language and literacy. It also allowed educators to combine Pre-K funding with other funding streams, such as Head Start, child care and preschool special education.

UPK legislation also required public schools and community-based early childhood programs (CBO's) to collaborate in the design and launch of Pre-K services and to ensure the new services were aligned with the K-12 system. With many community programs serving younger children as well as four-year-olds, the new collaborations bolstered efforts to create a continuum of services from the prenatal months through the early elementary years.

The Board of Regents has since formally endorsed a birth through third-grade strategy, which draws on research that shows the early years are critical in preparing children for success in school and beyond.<sup>1</sup> Such a strategy is also crucial to improving the early elementary grades, which have been largely neglected in recent school reform efforts.<sup>2</sup>

In the last 12 years, UPK has produced exciting results. Most importantly, school districts around the state report gains in language, emergent reading and social skills. In addition, research shows that states providing fully-funded universal Pre-K tend to serve more at-risk children than those using a more targeted approach.

**Despite the promise of Universal Prekindergarten, serious challenges remain:**

- » Currently, up to 120,000 four-year-olds await seats<sup>3</sup> and few three-year-olds are served.
- » The funding formula and part-day approach hinder both Pre-K's educational effectiveness and potential for expansion.
- » The state lacks uniform strategies to assess program quality and student progress.
- » State and local leaders have failed to provide the leadership needed to coordinate Pre-K funding with other resources that support early learning.

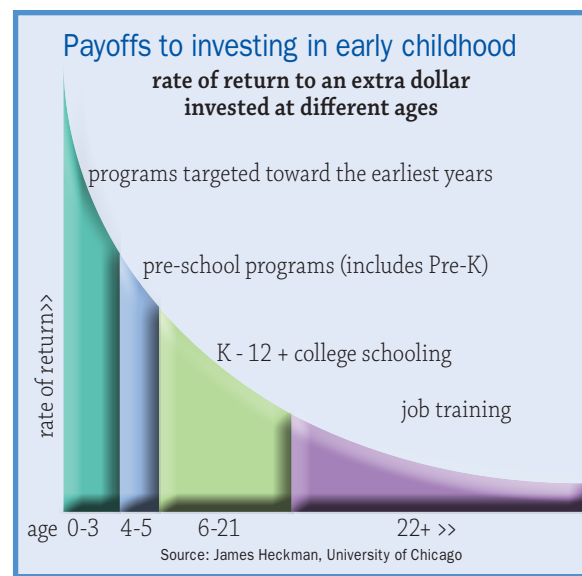
This report describes the current state of Pre-K across New York State and the lessons learned over the last 12 years. While much progress has been made, essential reforms are needed now. New federal funding, including Innovation grants, education stimulus funding and the anticipated Early Learning Challenge Grant, could provide potential resources for such policy changes.<sup>4</sup>



The 11 recommendations in this report, summarized below, aim to help state officials revise UPK legislation so that the state’s investment is better coordinated with other funding to make more efficient use of community resources and produce better outcomes for children.<sup>5</sup> They also aim to fulfill the original promise of universal access.

## Recommendations for Strengthening the Pre-K Investment

- » The Governor and the Board of Regents should **create a new Office of Early Care and Learning** to develop a comprehensive and accessible system of services for children from the prenatal months to third grade.
- » New York State should **create a robust early learning data system** linked with the K-12 system.
- » The Legislature, with support from the State Education Department (SED), should **revise the UPK financing statute so that Pre-K funding is sustainable and predictable**, allows all districts to participate and ensures high-quality services that are accessible to all children.
- » The Legislature should **enact legislation to implement QUALITYstarsNY** as the state’s quality measure for all early childhood programs.
- » The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) should **develop a five-year plan to prepare an early childhood workforce** with appropriate compensation, credentials and field experience.
- » SED should develop recommendations to **create a uniform approach to student assessment** in all early childhood settings.
- » State officials should **strengthen the mixed delivery system** for early care and learning.
- » SED and Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) should **strengthen support for English Language Learners** in all early childhood settings.
- » The ECAC should develop **recommendations for building new facilities and improving existing ones** to ensure every child has access to a high-quality early learning environment.
- » SED and OCFS should **strengthen collaboration between public schools and community partners**.
- » The Legislature should enact legislation to **create an infant-toddler set-aside** as part of future Pre-K funding to improve quality and expand access to services for babies and toddlers.



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# PROFILE OF STATE PRE-K TODAY

New York's Universal Prekindergarten initiative was part of education reform legislation, which also called for reduced class size and full-day kindergarten. Improving language and literacy was a primary goal. State officials envisioned a gradual roll-out of Pre-K services, with the goal of achieving universal access in five years.

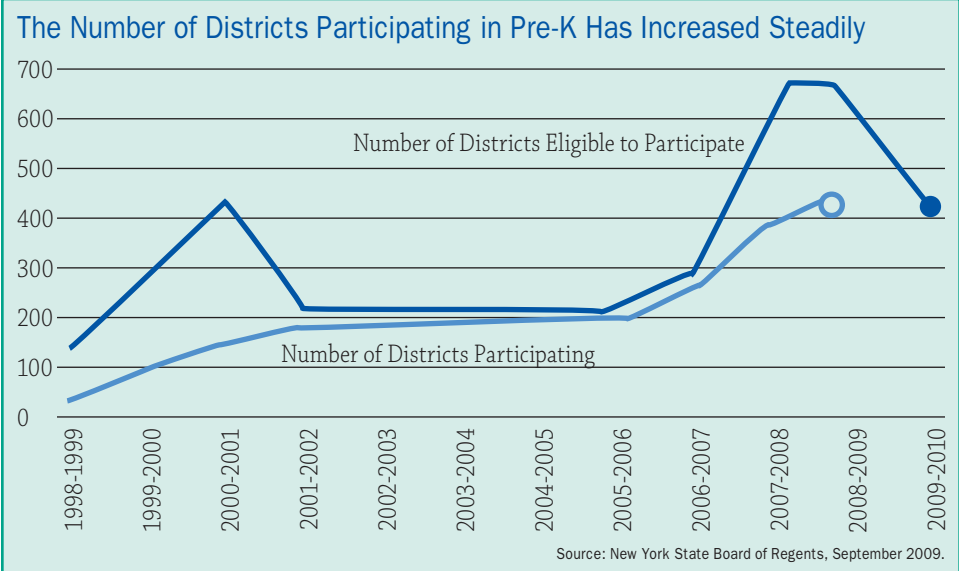
Today, access to preschool has vastly improved, with more than 100,000 four-year-olds now enrolled in Pre-K across the state. The state's financial commitment to Pre-K has also increased substantially, with the UPK investment growing from \$67 million in 1998 to \$414 million in the 2009-10 school year.

Most importantly, children in Pre-K are growing academically and otherwise. In addition to the previously-mentioned gains in language, reading and social skills,<sup>6</sup> districts with broader assessment measures also show gains for children in emotional adjustment and self-regulation, math and numeracy, and physical and mental health. Such gains demonstrate the potential for preschool education to close the achievement gap, reduce the need for remedial services and boost high school graduation rates.

## Funding and Financing

During the first eight years of implementation, the state provided categorical grants to a limited number of school districts, giving priority to high-need, low-wealth communities and large school districts. Prior to 2007, only about a third of the state's 677 districts participated. Annual UPK funding was uncertain and districts were often notified about their allocations in late summer, too late for appropriate planning and outreach to fill seats. In the first year of operation, the state's per-child rate ranged from \$2,700 to \$4,000.

In 2007, state officials made Pre-K funding available to all districts for the first time and added \$146 million to support a broad expansion. Lawmakers also created a new Pre-K funding formula, patterned after foundation aid for K-12 schools.<sup>7</sup> Like K-12 aid, the Pre-K formula takes into account student need index,<sup>8</sup> regional cost differences and school district property wealth. The Pre-K rate is half the K-12 rate, since it is only a 2.5-hour program, about half the regular school day.



Unlike school aid, however, the level of state funding is capped. Currently, per-pupil rates range from a minimum of \$2,700<sup>9</sup> to \$5,785. New York City receives \$3,300, which is about average. Per-pupil rates for most districts have remained flat over the last 12 years.

Many districts supplement state UPK funding with local revenues, federal education funding, or special funding to promote early literacy. Generally, school districts provide the supplemental funding only to school-based classrooms, and use the state's per-pupil rate as a guide for CBO contracts. Many districts also use some of the state UPK funding to cover their administrative costs and professional development.

New York's Pre-K legislation doesn't assume or require a local share of funding, as do statutes governing K-12 funding. Still, the current Pre-K aid formula was patterned after the K-12 aid formula. The issue of local share is an emerging one in New York as well as other states that have added Pre-K services.

## Participating Districts

Today, 450 of the state's 677 districts – about two out of three – participate, but with current state funding frozen, no new districts will be allowed to join the effort. Most of those already offering Pre-K have high concentrations of working class and low-income children. “It's really the city and the low-income suburbs that have been eager to implement UPK,” says Peggy Liuzzi, executive director of Child Care Solutions in Syracuse, New York. “That's where you have districts that recognize the value of Pre-K in closing the achievement gap and know that many families are unable to afford private programs.”

The Big Five school districts – New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers – have achieved the broadest implementation, with New York City leading the way. More than 57,000 children in New York City now receive state Pre-K services, more than half the children enrolled statewide.<sup>10</sup>

The 225 districts that do not participate in the state's Pre-K initiative tend to be higher-wealth suburban districts. School officials from these districts cite the lower per-pupil rates designated for their districts as well as uncertainty about future funding.

Some rural districts declined to participate for logistical reasons. For example, children would have to travel long distances for just 2.5 hours of class time. Plus, there was no transportation aid for UPK students and few community partners with which to collaborate.



## Mixed System for Service Delivery

The mandate for collaboration with community programs led to quick implementation of Pre-K in many districts, especially those with overcrowded schools. Overall, the state has far exceeded the mandate to provide 10 percent of Pre-K services in non-public school settings, creating a diverse array of options in many communities. About 43 percent of the state's Pre-K funding is now invested in community programs, which serve 54 percent of the children.<sup>11</sup> Children are enrolled in child care and Head Start programs, YWCA's and YMCA's, settlement houses, private and parochial schools and even children's museums and libraries.

The diversity of providers has been especially beneficial for working families who need year-round, extended-day services. The ability to combine UPK funding with other funding streams, such as Head Start, child care and special education has also allowed many districts to use existing capacity and resources more effectively. Head Start and Preschool Special Education funding, for example, cover

nutrition, health, social service and family supports called for in UPK legislation, but not adequately funded. The diversity of Pre-K providers also offers more choice for families, especially those seeking programs that are culturally and linguistically competent.<sup>12</sup>

The infusion of new UPK funding into community-based early childhood programs has also brought new resources and equipment to many programs that previously depended on parent fees, child care subsidies and fund-raising to support their services. One early childhood coordinator in New York City said, "The classrooms are more enriched, have more books and many have created a language-rich, inviting environment."<sup>13</sup>

About one-third of participating districts have waivers exempting them from collaboration. Local school officials cite four main reasons for seeking waivers: (1) lack of local programs to collaborate with; (2) local programs fail to meet quality standards; (3) community programs do not wish to collaborate; and (4) the district is in the process of updating and reviewing the contracting process.<sup>14</sup> Surveys and interviews also reveal the need for greater technical assistance and support to strengthen and expand collaborations with community-based programs.<sup>15</sup>





## Integration of Special Needs Children

Universal Prekindergarten changed the educational landscape dramatically for children with special needs. “With the advent of UPK, full integration of four-year-olds comes within reach,” said Margerie Ames, former executive director of the InterAgency Council of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc.<sup>16</sup> The new UPK funding proved especially useful to community programs that had long served special needs children and could then add Pre-K seats and recruit more typically-developing children.

The launch of Pre-K also allowed school district officials a new opportunity to satisfy the legal mandate that disabled children be served in the least restrictive environment, alongside their more typically-developing peers. Preschool special education had been mandated for children starting at age three, but there had been no parallel “general education” program for other three- and four-year-olds. Though the goal of full integration is not yet attained, much progress has been made. About 5 percent of the children enrolled in Pre-K have special needs – 12 percent would represent full integration.<sup>17</sup>

## English Language Learners

State law calls for Pre-K programs to provide support to children with limited English proficiency, including culturally-competent programming and information for parents in their primary language. Yet because Pre-K is a voluntary program, state and local officials have collected little data and offered only minimal support for English Language Learners (ELLs). Statewide efforts to collect data on ELL students in Pre-K stopped in recent years.

There are more than 220,000 ELLs in the state’s K-12 system and studies show that such children are at higher risk for school failure. Thus, advocates and education officials have called for increased attention to the needs of ELLs in Pre-K programs. They emphasize the need to collect more data, recruit and train more teachers who are linguistically and culturally competent, and develop appropriate curriculum and assessment for this population.<sup>18</sup>

### Fast facts on Pre-K in New York

4-year-olds served, 2008-09	100,208
Estimated participation in 2009-10	109,031
Total 4-year-old population in NY**	240,000
Participating districts	450
% of children served in CBO’s	54%
Total UPK funding*	\$414.1 million

\*2009-2010 school year \*\* Rounded to the nearest thousand  
Source: State Education Department



# CRITICAL CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

The State Board of Regents has long championed the expansion of Pre-K services as part of the state's public education system.<sup>20</sup> This is a logical goal given the significant achievements during the first 12 years of UPK. The Legislature has dramatically increased Pre-K funding and expanded the number of children served since 2007. But in 2009, state officials froze funding, stalled further expansion and have failed to heed recommendations to improve Pre-K implementation. In 2009, state officials cited the state's fiscal challenges for their inaction despite the fact that research shows the state can save money and improve children's school readiness by reforming the Pre-K legislation.<sup>21</sup> This report draws on surveys, interviews, data and research on implementation of Pre-K, both in New York State and nationally, to identify the key challenges that remain and make recommendations for next steps to strengthen the state's Pre-K investment and achieve better outcomes for children.

## Funding and financing issues

### **Inappropriate funding levels**

The state's UPK funding formula and per-pupil allocations don't cover the true cost of Pre-K services, given the program standards and scope of services envisioned in the legislation. Highly-qualified teachers and aides, research-based instruction, professional development and adequate supports for health, nutrition, social and emotional development each come with a price tag that far exceeds the rates provided to most districts. National researchers estimate the true cost of providing a half-day of high-quality preschool to be \$5,000-\$7,000, but the state's per-child rate currently ranges from \$2,700 to \$5,750.<sup>22</sup>

### **Transportation aid**

The state's failure to provide transportation aid for Pre-K students reduces the number of children served across the state. Without transportation, many families simply can't get their children to a program. Some districts, especially those in rural areas, report the lack of transportation aid as a primary barrier to launching Pre-K.

Some participating districts use local revenues to provide transportation. Others have turned to their community partners, such as local Head Start providers, to provide transportation. As the economy soured, however, a growing number of district officials report they can no longer afford to cover transportation, which could reduce the number of children served in the future.<sup>23</sup>

### **Maintenance of effort**

In the 2007 revision of the Pre-K aid formula, state officials tied local maintenance of effort requirements to the number of students served. This created significant challenges for districts that had used federal funding or local revenues to supplement UPK dollars. As local

A growing number of districts are finding it difficult to maintain enrollment.



budgets tightened, districts no longer could afford to supplement UPK dollars and in some cases, enrollment began to slip. As a result, 101 districts received less state Pre-K funding in 2008-09, creating further challenges to maintaining the same number of students. The Board of Regents has reported that it is likely that more districts will be affected in the future if the maintenance of effort formula is not revised.<sup>24</sup>

## Lack of state funding for full-day Pre-K

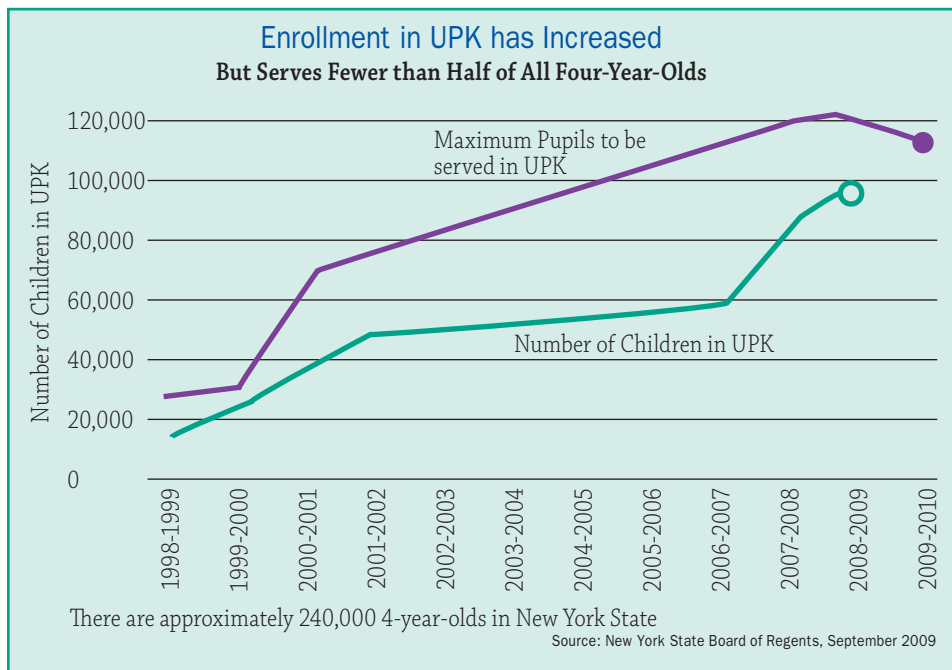
### Barrier to Educational Effectiveness

Passing legislation for free part-day Pre-K services was a major political accomplishment in 1997. But even at that time there was abundant evidence that full-day services could broaden access and enhance the educational benefits of Pre-K. Since then, research has further documented the importance of full-day programs for both middle-income and low-income children.<sup>25</sup>

Today, many states, including neighboring New Jersey, fund the six-hour preschool day advocated by educators and researchers in New York. Research documents that children in full-day Pre-K have better language and math skills than those who attend three hours or less. Full-day services are also more effective in closing the achievement gap between higher-income and lower-income children.<sup>26</sup>

### Barrier to Expansion

The state's half-day Pre-K allocations are cited as the top barrier to expansion in districts of all sizes. Both participating and non-participating districts on Long Island cited the state's part-day funding as one of the primary reasons for declining some or all UPK aid in the 2007-08 school year.<sup>27</sup>





“The logistics just don’t work when parents work. If they have to scramble to figure out the rest of the day, many just won’t enroll their children,” said Peggy Wozniak, superintendent of the Binghamton school district. Binghamton could accommodate 385 more four-year-olds if full-day funding were available. Rochester could serve 400-500 more.

Collaboration with community partners has created extended-day, year-round options for some families. Head Start, child care and special education programs, for example, have added some full-day Pre-K seats. Yet the alternative funding sources associated with those programs have declined in recent years, and many programs now have waiting lists. In addition, full-day children may have to switch classrooms, buildings or even travel across town to take advantage of programs like Head Start or child care. Research shows that such transitions disrupt learning as well as emotional and social adjustment.

In 2007, the New York City Council secured some funding for full-day options at community sites, but it fell far short of the need.<sup>28</sup> “We had a long waiting list of interested families two years ago when we expected to get full-day UPK funding from the city,” said one program director in the Bronx. Ultimately, the funding did not materialize. “It’s much easier to figure out how to support wraparound services for a six-hour day than it is to build out from 2.5 hours,” she said.

## Limited Focus on Four-Year-Olds

### Pre-K for three- and four-year-olds is more effective

The State Board of Regents has called for Pre-K services for three-year-olds as part of its vision for early childhood education. The proposal has a precedent in the state’s earlier Targeted Pre-K program, a school-based initiative for low-income three- and four-year-olds.<sup>29</sup> At its peak, the effort reached 19,000 three- and four-year-olds. In 2007, the Legislature folded the program into the Universal Prekindergarten initiative. Only a handful of districts received waivers to continue to serve three-year-olds in Pre-K.

“The focus on four’s is just too limited,” says Karen Howard, director of early childhood programs for the Syracuse public school system. “We see that as one of the key barriers to UPK reaching its full promise, that emphasis on educating four-year-olds only.” The district’s data deepened its commitment to pursuing the waiver. About 90 percent of the children with two years of Pre-K were fully prepared for kindergarten, compared with about 70 percent of those who had a single year of Pre-K.<sup>30</sup>

Data from the Targeted Pre-K effort show that it produced significant gains for children in literacy and language as well as social and emotional adjustment.<sup>31</sup> National research, indeed the very research that lawmakers relied on to make the case for the UPK initiative, also shows significant gains for three-year-olds and even younger children in early childhood education.<sup>32</sup>

“The logistics just don’t work when parents work,” one superintendent says. Many districts cite half-day funding as the top barrier to expansion.



“It’s just so clear that we need to start earlier and three’s are really a no-brainer,” said Ray Bryant, superintendent of Waldwick schools. “The earlier we go, the more intense the services, the greater the impact and the greater the benefits.”

Some school districts, including Elmira, where Bryant worked previously, have realigned services across the community to ensure that as many three-year-olds are served as possible. Often, that means Head Start programs increase the number of three-year-olds, while public Pre-K classes focus on four-year-olds.

A special commission on education reform in New York City proposed a broad expansion of Pre-K services for three-year-olds as a critical next step in closing the achievement gap.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the Board of Regents advocates the addition of services for three-year-olds as a path to integrating more children with special needs. Preschool special education starts at age three, and federal law mandates these children be integrated with their typically-developing peers as much as possible. The addition of three-year-olds to public Pre-K would make it easier to integrate more classes.

At the same time, advocates, service providers and parents emphasize the need to be mindful of the way adding three-year-olds to Pre-K can impact overall capacity and resources to support young children in individual communities and neighborhoods. It’s critical that local officials work to ensure optimal and efficient use of resources in both public schools and community programs.<sup>34</sup>

### **Investment in babies and toddlers further strengthens Pre-K outcomes**

Many of the studies that state leaders and advocates cited to support the Pre-K initiative included infants and toddlers, as well as preschoolers. But in 1997, there was little political support for publicly-funded services for babies and toddlers.

A landmark report released in 2000, however, highlighted the importance of infant-toddler development and made a stronger case for investing as early as possible.<sup>35</sup> Studies now show the first three years of life are fundamentally different from all others, with the brain growing extremely fast and creating the foundation for all later learning and development.

The findings prompted New York’s early childhood advocates to launch a vigorous campaign for an expanded investment in services starting in the prenatal months and continuing through elementary school.<sup>36</sup> A statewide “Better Baby Care” campaign also focused on improving child care options for babies and toddlers. Similar campaigns blossomed across the country, leading to a new set-aside in federal child care funding to improve care for children under three. In 2003, the state created a network of regional centers to disseminate best practices and offer technical assistance to providers caring for children under three.<sup>37</sup>

The Board of Regents addressed children under two in a 2006 policy statement calling for high-quality prenatal care, health services and educational services to prepare children for school, with special attention to the needs of children with limited English proficiency or

**Outcomes are better  
for children who  
start Pre-K at 3.**



disabilities.<sup>38</sup> The state has slightly expanded home visiting initiatives, and increased the reimbursement rate it pays to programs that serve infants and toddlers. But the overall investment in services to support children under three has not increased significantly, especially when compared to the growing need.<sup>39</sup> Ninety percent of the calls to parent referral hotlines in New York City are for infant care; yet the city has only one regulated slot for every five babies who need one.<sup>40</sup>

Other states, most notably Illinois, have created strategies to expand investment in infants and toddlers as Pre-K expands. New York should learn from these examples and adopt a similar approach.<sup>41</sup>

## Unequal access to health, mental health and social services

The UPK legislation called for comprehensive services, including health, mental health, nutrition, social services and family supports. Research shows this is the most effective approach to early childhood education, given that a problem in one area of a child's development, such as a hearing loss or learning disability, can slow or even derail overall development and learning.

However, state aid for Pre-K does not provide sufficient funding for the full range of services called for in the law. Without appropriate state funding, districts have turned to supplementary funding, such as federal Title I funding, special grants or preschool special education (IDEA) funding to provide the additional services in school-based classrooms. The resources are not routinely made available to community programs.

Many districts also rely on their community-based partners, especially Head Start, to provide the full range of services. But some single-purpose early childhood education programs, by contrast, may not even have a nurse on staff. As a result, the services provided to children vary based on the mission and resources of the agency or school, leaving it to chance which children will have their eyes tested, teeth checked, or be screened for a developmental delay.

"It's a crime when you see the supports some children have, while others – especially those with serious emotional problems or family issues – have to do without," says one New York City educator. "The goal of UPK was to level the playing field, but we can't do that if we don't give all children access to the critical supports they need."<sup>42</sup>

A few districts, especially in upstate New York, use special education funding to support UPK services. Syracuse, for example, allows nurses, social workers and psychologists to work with children in all settings. The district also has speech pathologists, occupational therapy and developmental screening services available, as needed, for Pre-K students.<sup>43</sup>

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## Insufficient investment in workforce

The launch of the Pre-K initiative, followed by the state's commitment to a P-20 system of education, created a new rationale for vigorous teacher preparation.<sup>44</sup> Over the last 12 years, UPK created the need for at least 3,000 new teachers certified in early childhood education.<sup>45</sup> The state took an initial and important step to meet the need in 2004, with the creation of a new Birth to Second grade (B-2) teaching credential. The new certification puts a strong emphasis on child development, developmentally-appropriate practice and child-centered learning.

Studies confirm that young children learn more with teachers who have a background in child development and the training to foster social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and to create a healthy and safe learning environment.<sup>46</sup> The National Institute of Early Education Research has even concluded that the quality of an early childhood program can be measured by staff credentials and compensation.<sup>47</sup>

### Failure to invest in workforce development

Unlike other states, New York has yet to invest in workforce development to assure a qualified teacher at the head of every Pre-K classroom. The state's colleges and universities have only added the courses necessary for a B-2 certification. Most teachers' colleges have yet to make the courses a priority because of the lack of demand. The K-12 system still prefers teachers with elementary school certification, rather than B-2. While teachers with elementary school certification often lack expertise in child development, they are more versatile and can move to higher grades as needed. That makes the B-2 certification less appealing to prospective teachers, especially given the expense associated with securing a college degree.

Teachers already working in early childhood settings outside the schools also lack support when they seek to enhance their credentials and training. There are few scholarships or loan forgiveness programs. In addition, it is difficult to transfer credits between two-year and four-year institutions.

In the past, child advocacy organizations have worked with colleges to improve and expand course offerings and credentials. One of the most promising proposals put forth by New York's advocates was modeled after the highly-successful Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) initiative, now used in more than 20 states.<sup>48</sup> There have also been proposals for loan forgiveness for teachers already in the field who seek to improve their credentials and training.<sup>49</sup> None of these proposals have received serious attention from lawmakers.

New York's failure to invest in creation of a qualified workforce contrasts with the efforts of neighboring states, most notably New Jersey, which has taken aggressive steps to build an early childhood workforce and improve compensation, benefits and professional



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development opportunities. New Jersey created scholarships to attract students to teaching majors and created a clear path for existing teachers who wish to get additional training and credentials.

Most importantly, New Jersey now requires comparable pay for comparably-credentialed teachers working in Pre-K classrooms in public schools and community settings. For some teachers, that translated into a raise of \$30,000 a year. About 6,600 teachers have taken advantage of scholarships and professional development opportunities, and studies show a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning.<sup>50</sup>

### **Failure to fund professional development**

Unlike many other states, New York did not fund professional development in its UPK legislation. This means districts seeking to improve Pre-K services must rely on their already tight budgets to offer such opportunities.

“We all know that we need to strengthen the quality and intensity of instruction,” says Cindy Gallagher, state Coordinator of Early Education and Reading Initiatives. “That means professional development... but we haven’t created the infrastructure to do it.”

New research provides promising strategies for disseminating best practices, including how to use data to inform classroom instruction and work with individual students more productively.<sup>51</sup> The anticipated federal Early Learning Challenge Grant could provide resources to create a better infrastructure for professional preparation and development.

Other states emphasize Pre-K professional development. New Jersey, for example, created an Office of Early Childhood Education within its state education department. The new office provides technical assistance and helps disseminate best practices through a system of mentor teachers and coaching across the state. More recently, New Jersey launched a broad effort to align Pre-K to third grade education, including structural, instructional and assessment strategies.<sup>52</sup>

### **Lack of coordination for early childhood investments**

State officials have not established a process for resolving issues that arise when programs or communities seek to integrate funding streams that have competing regulatory frameworks and missions. This failure was a problem identified early on by experts, program directors and advocacy organizations.<sup>53</sup> Without strong leadership, local agencies and providers face tough questions about the most basic aspects of Pre-K services:

- » How should costs be allocated among funding streams?
- » Should public schools open Pre-K classrooms in neighborhoods with community programs already serving preschoolers?

**With significant investments already made in services for young children, public officials need to do more to coordinate resources.**





- » Should school districts be allowed to turn down state Pre-K funding if a local community program is willing to provide the services?
- » How do schools and their community partners recruit students to ensure families have the broadest choices and all seats are filled?

The answers to these questions have already produced troubling results at the local level. State education officials and local surveys report that a growing number of school districts are bringing UPK services in-house to shore up their own budgets, actions that have destabilized local Head Start and child care programs, by reducing enrollment in these community programs. In some cases, local officials have reduced overall resources as they integrate Pre-K with other early childhood services.<sup>54</sup>

### **Unequal resources across settings**

The issue of how resources are allocated and coordinated to support early learning opportunities is complicated by the fact that most community programs operate as autonomous programs, without the infrastructure of public school systems and supplemental education funding often invested in public school classrooms. The disparities between the investment in community and public school settings can be striking. One study in New York City, for example, found UPK classrooms in the public schools receive \$4,100-\$4,400 per child, compared to an average of \$3,300 for community programs.<sup>55</sup>

### **Unequal access to highly-qualified teachers**

This disparity in resources plays out most acutely in the competition to attract and retain qualified teachers. Even before the state created Pre-K, community programs faced challenges attracting and retaining qualified staff, mostly because they lacked the resources to properly compensate teachers. With the advent of Pre-K, they faced instant competition for certified teachers from the public schools, compounding the problem. Public schools had an overwhelming advantage in attracting qualified teachers since they offered significantly better compensation and benefits for working a shorter day and year.

In many communities, that has turned the community programs into training grounds for the public schools. “The minute a teacher gets certified, they go to the public schools. We want to run a quality program, but the low rates make it hard to do that,” says the director of a community-based program in Queens. “Turnover among my staff is my number one problem.”

State officials recognized the challenges the CBO’s faced and adopted a short-term solution. The state would grant waivers to programs using uncertified teachers as long as the overall program was overseen by a certified teacher. Initially, the waivers were to be granted only until the 2001-02 school year. But legislators have extended the waivers every year since the launch.<sup>56</sup> This means uncertified teachers may work for years in community-based Pre-K

“Turnover among my staff is my number one problem,” says one Pre-K program director.



There are no uniform protocols for collecting and reporting data on students across districts or even across different settings in the same district.

classrooms where more than half of the state's four-year-olds attend preschool. One 2005 survey in New York City found that about a half of the city's UPK teachers in community settings were still not certified.<sup>57</sup>

The inability of CBO's to retain certified teachers has a profound impact on children's learning and development. "We end up with teachers on study plans at CBO's who are constantly seeking to go to the district. That means we have less experienced teachers in the CBO's, and less experienced teachers are likely to be less effective," says one director of early childhood programs for a mid-size upstate school district.

Some districts cite the lack of certified teachers as a primary reason for seeking a waiver from the state mandate to contract with CBOs. Yet these waivers reduce choices for families and run counter to the law's original intent to support community-based preschools as well as those in public schools.

In the past, child advocacy organizations and early childhood professional groups have proposed comparable compensation for comparably-credentialed teachers in all settings. One recent proposal urged the state to create a Teacher Equity Compensation Fund to do just that.<sup>58</sup> New Jersey officials took an even bolder step in addressing the disparities in resources between public schools and community programs, after costing out the components of quality Pre-K. State officials concluded that CBO's actually need slightly higher per-pupil funding for Pre-K and integrated that finding into its Pre-K funding formula.<sup>59</sup>

Over time, flat funding makes the disparities between school-based and community-based Pre-K programs even worse. "We haven't seen an increase in our contract for six years," said one program director in New York City. "During that time, my insurance costs have gone through the roof. So have other costs." A 2006 survey by the CBO Network in New York City, an association of community programs with Pre-K contracts, estimated that community-based programs had absorbed a 20 percent rate cut since the launch of UPK, once inflation was taken into account.

In recent years, with district budgets increasingly tight, funding for community partners has been reduced in a variety of ways. In some cases, districts have canceled contracts with Pre-K partners and brought the services into public schools. In other cases, they have changed the contracting process into what some advocates have characterized as a race to the bottom in terms of quality.<sup>60</sup>

### **No Uniform Strategy for Student Assessment**

State regulations require districts to assess and report on children's progress in Pre-K, but there are still no common assessment tools. Starting in 2008-09, the State Education Department required districts to provide annual reports on the percentage of children making



significant gains in language, emergent reading and social skills. Individual districts have submitted their reports, but there are no uniform protocols for collecting and reporting the data across districts or even across different settings in the same district.

Creating a valid and reliable tool for assessing student progress in all settings is a daunting task. In general, districts seek to assure that Pre-K students have adequate language and reasoning skills, as well as the emotional, physical and social skills needed for kindergarten. Many programs use the tools and protocols established by various publicly-funded programs, such as Head Start and Early Reading First. Some use tools embedded in a particular curricula, such as High Scope.

New York is not alone in its struggle to assess young children's progress. At least 17 other states are currently developing "school readiness" and "child outcome" measures for pre-school students. In addition to tracking children's progress, the assessments provide teachers with information to help ease the transition to kindergarten and evaluate Pre-K efforts. The anticipated Early Learning Challenge Grant may provide resources for the creation of common early childhood assessments.

To date, the Rochester school district is the only one in the state that has created a school readiness measure that can be used in both school and community-based Pre-K classrooms. The assessments, created with help from the Children's Institute, are now posted and shared online so both teachers and parents can track children's progress, both in a single year and as children transition from one year to the next and one setting to another.

### **No common tools for assessing program quality**

School districts also lack uniform strategies for assessing program quality. Many principals and superintendents have no background in early childhood education and lack the skills to assess classroom practices or environment.<sup>62</sup> Community-based programs often face multiple program assessments, based on the mandates associated with various funding streams. Head Start, for example, covers teacher credentials and practice aimed at promoting healthy development and learning. Child care funding may focus primarily on health and safety issues. The new UPK legislation added another layer of complexity, with its focus on school readiness and alignment with the public schools.

Both local and state education officials concede that assessing programs in different settings, especially those with multiple funding streams, is a major challenge. New York City, for example, has worked for three years to develop a common tool for programs that combine Head Start, Pre-K and child care funding, but implementation has been challenging. As a result, the state's early childhood coordinators have instructed some community programs to designate a 2.5 hour segment as Pre-K and have focused their assessments only on that small slice of what is often a 10-hour day for enrolled children.<sup>63</sup>

**Both local and state education officials concede that assessing programs in different settings, especially those with multiple funding streams, is a major challenge.**



The lack of a robust data infrastructure hampers all aspects of assessment and implementation.

Nineteen other states have addressed the program evaluation issue by creating Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, which create benchmarks for the learning environment, support services and classroom practice. Most also include incentives for programs to meet those benchmarks as well as professional development and technical assistance to make improvements. The federal government is expected to require all states that want to compete for the anticipated Early Learning Challenge Grant to create a QRIS system.

New York State is developing its own quality rating and improvement system, called QUALITYstarsNY. The new system assesses both the structural and instructional components of early childhood programs, and awards one to five stars, indicating the number of benchmarks met. The state is currently field-testing the system in all types of preschool settings in 13 communities across the state. There is still much work to do in rolling out the system statewide, but it is a promising tool for improving the quality of services and providing an easily understandable barometer of program quality that can be used by parents and policy makers.

**Lack of data infrastructure**

New York State’s efforts to create a prenatal-to-third-grade strategy are also hampered by the absence of a basic data infrastructure. Thus, there is no data that provides an unduplicated count of children under five enrolled in publicly-funded programs. There is also no unique child identifier, which makes it impossible to track a child’s progress across settings and services.

Instead, state agencies count the number of children served by particular funding streams, using the reporting requirements and protocols associated with each source of funding. Efforts to collect more comprehensive information on children remain siloed in various state agencies and even within agencies. The State Education Department, for example, still keeps separate data on K-12 and Pre-K children and uses different data to assess children’s progress. The state’s Office of Head Start Collaboration can access aggregate data on children, their families and the staff in Head Start programs,<sup>64</sup> but cannot coordinate that data with that from other state agencies.

A related problem is that data on children under age three is rarely disaggregated from broader data sets. Instead, it is aggregated into reports on children under age five, making it especially challenging to track needs, services and the effectiveness of services for the state’s youngest children.<sup>65</sup>

New York’s challenges in collecting data on early childhood services and children’s progress are typical according to national studies.<sup>66</sup> Fortunately, research has identified some promising strategies which can guide New York’s work on this front.<sup>67</sup> Federal education stimulus funding, as well as the anticipated Early Learning Challenge Grant and Race to the Top



grant, could provide some resources for resolving this challenge in the near-term.<sup>68</sup> In the long term, state officials must create a comprehensive approach to accurately counting Pre-K children and tracking the services they receive.

## Failure to fully support collaboration

### Elimination of local UPK advisory boards

The original UPK legislation required local districts to convene advisory boards to plan and launch Pre-K services in their communities. But unlike other states, New York provided no special funding for planning or start-up costs, leaving it to the energetic efforts of local leaders in the public schools and early childhood community.

Local Pre-K administrators who had overseen the implementation of the earlier Targeted Pre-K services brought critical leadership and expertise to the effort. But communities that had never offered Targeted Pre-K lacked this guidance.

Nonprofit groups, child care resource and referral agencies and advocacy coalitions worked to fill the funding and planning gap. With money from a number of local and state foundations, they created handbooks, offered technical assistance, hosted forums and produced reports and policy briefs to support UPK implementation.

State Pre-K legislation failed to require that UPK advisory boards continue to promote collaboration and improve implementation after services were launched. That said, many continued to meet for as long as five years. In 2007, state lawmakers eliminated the requirement that districts convene UPK advisory boards even for the initial launch. The disappearance of these boards dealt a serious blow to collaboration and planning, leaving districts new to the Pre-K effort with fewer opportunities for community engagement. Two recent reports have cited the lack of funding and technical assistance during the planning stage as barriers to further UPK expansion.<sup>69</sup>

### Lack of expertise among K-12 educators

As a non-mandated service and a newcomer to public education, Pre-K is often undervalued by K-12 educators. Indeed, research shows that early childhood education is the most cost-effective and educationally-effective way to close the achievement gap.<sup>70</sup> One economist estimates the state could save the public schools up to \$828 million a year and better prepare a child for success in school by fully funding UPK.<sup>71</sup>

Yet Pre-K services tend to fall to the bottom of many local superintendents' to-do lists. "Many are just too busy, there are so many mandates and demands on their time," said Peggy Wozniak, superintendent of the Binghamton school district.

Unlike other states, New York provided no special funding for planning or start-up costs.

Pre-K services tend to fall to the bottom of many local superintendents' to-do lists.



## The state has no plan for building or renovation as Pre-K services expand.

Many public school leaders lack expertise or even basic knowledge of child development and early childhood education. Some are still skeptical of the value of early childhood education, dismissing it as babysitting. More than a few teachers and principals regard teaching in kindergarten and Pre-K as a demotion.<sup>72</sup>

Several national educational associations have sought to educate their memberships about child development and early childhood education, as well as professional development opportunities for K-12 superintendents, principals and teachers. Also promising are surveys that show increasing support for early childhood education among school administrators, especially when new resources are offered to provide the services.<sup>73</sup>

### No plan to improve and expand physical infrastructure

To date, the state has relied on communities to cobble together Pre-K slots in local public schools and community programs, which means unequal access to quality environments. Many classrooms, in both public schools and community settings, need renovation and repair. Some are not age-appropriate or conducive to high-quality instruction.

Currently, the state has no plan for building or renovation as Pre-K services expand and younger children are enrolled. New York-based and national groups have advocated for more federal resources to plan and build new facilities, as well as improve existing ones.

In addition, there is no comprehensive data on statewide capacity to serve young children. The data that does exist fails to provide a full picture of the quality of classrooms where young children spend their days.



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In 2010, New York's leaders will have unique opportunities to move the state toward a world-class system of early childhood education. While the state faces fiscal challenges, new federal funding and policies provide critical resources to take the next steps – steps that can save the public schools hundreds of millions of dollars a year and produce better outcomes for the children. The Board of Regents has supplied a blueprint for action. Advocates and educators in all settings are eager to collaborate. Still, it will take bold leadership from the state's elected officials, starting with essential reforms to the state's Pre-K initiative.

## Principles for reform

**Several key principles emerged from our research to help guide implementation of our 11 recommendations.**

**Pre-K must be part of a continuum of services from the prenatal months to third grade.**

Research shows investing early and continuously in young children is the most cost-effective and educationally-sound way to close the achievement gap. Such an approach can address developmental delays early and prevent the need for remedial services later. In addition, such a continuum helps children transition successfully to elementary school and strengthens K-3 instruction.

**The universal approach serves children better than targeted efforts.**

Research shows that states providing universal access tend to serve more at-risk children than those that use a more targeted approach.<sup>74</sup> UPK also serves a growing number of middle-class families who can't afford private preschool programs. Finally, it helps integrate special needs children with typically-developing children.

Pre-K must be effectively and efficiently coordinated with existing community programs. A service delivery system that makes the most of capacity in both schools and early childhood programs in the community offers the broadest array of choices for families, including year-round, extended day services. New investments in Pre-K should preserve and strengthen capacity in all settings to meet children's and families' needs.

**Successful collaboration requires technical assistance and opportunities to learn.**

Most communities have only scratched the surface of collaboration between public schools and community programs to align teaching and learning, resources and capacity and ease transitions for children. Those with true partnerships have often relied on local foundations or special grants to build the skills and relationships to foster successful Pre-K programming and to ensure local communities make the most of existing resources and capacity.



# BUILDING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

## Strengthening the Pre-K Investment

1. The Governor and the Board of Regents should **create an Office of Early Care and Learning** to develop a comprehensive and accessible system of services for children from the prenatal months to third grade.
2. New York State should **create a robust early learning data system** linked with the K-12 system.
3. The Legislature, with support from the State Education Department, (SED) should **revise the UPK financing statute so that Pre-K funding is sustainable and predictable.** The level of funding should allow all districts to participate and ensure services are accessible to all children.
  - » Document the actual per-student cost of Pre-K services and guarantee comparable support to both community-based and public school programs.
  - » Ensure that full-day Pre-K options are funded.
  - » Expand eligibility for Pre-K services to three-year-olds.
  - » Include Pre-K students in transportation aid formulas.
  - » Allow charter schools to add Pre-K services.
4. The Legislature should **enact legislation to implement QUALITYstarsNY** as the state's quality measure for all early childhood programs.
5. The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) should **develop a five-year plan to prepare an early childhood workforce** with appropriate credentials and field experience.
  - » Create incentives to attract new teachers to the field.
  - » Provide financial rewards to teachers who complete professional training.
  - » Create comparable compensation for teachers with comparable credentials, regardless of the setting.
  - » Invest in professional development, including coaching and mentoring programs.





6. SED should develop recommendations to **create a uniform approach to student assessment** in all early childhood settings.
7. State officials should **strengthen the mixed delivery system** for early care and learning.
  - » Require communities to submit an annual plan for the delivery of early care and learning services to the proposed Office of Early Care and Learning.
  - » Eliminate state and federal regulations that limit effective blending of funds.
  - » Provide support to districts in using federal Title I funding for early education and home visiting.
8. SED and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) should **strengthen support for English Language Learners** in all early childhood settings.
9. The ECAC should develop recommendations for building new facilities and improving existing ones to ensure every child has access to a high-quality early learning environment.
10. SED and OCFS should **strengthen collaboration between public schools and community partners**.
  - » Create new professional development opportunities to deepen the knowledge of early learning among the K-12 community.
  - » Create a statewide technical assistance center on collaboration.
  - » Create a team of collaboration coordinators to assist districts in promoting collaborative relationships, professional development and best practices.
  - » Establish incentives to spur more effective collaborations between public schools and community programs.
11. The Legislature should **enact legislation to create an infant-toddler set-aside** in Pre-K funding to improve quality and expand access to services for babies and toddlers.



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4. A memorandum from the State of New York Council on Children and Families, sent by the co-chairs of the Early Childhood Advisory Council to the state's top education officials, sets forth key policy goals that could be advanced with Race to the Top funds.
5. The full text of the recommendations can be found at the end of this report.
6. The state began to require reports on these three aspects of learning in 2008-09 academic year. In addition, many districts report findings from early literacy and school readiness initiatives. Syracuse, Rochester and Binghamton have reported especially robust findings.
7. State officials created the new state aid formula as part of the resolution of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, New York's long-running school-financing case. Under the new formula, high-needs urban districts gained new funding. The Pre-K formula was also increased for high-needs, low-wealth districts.
8. The student need index takes into account the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, English Language Learners and other factors known to put children at risk of school failure.
9. The legislature set a floor of \$2700 on per-pupil Pre-K rates, regardless of per-child aid for K-12. Lawmakers created this floor to encourage districts to participate.
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12. Many community programs emerged in response to the needs of local immigrant communities and have supplemented the ability of public school districts to meet the needs and preferences of children and families whose primary language is not English.
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16. "UPK + 4410: Integrated Funding for Integrated Programs, March, 2000," Produced by Margerie Ames, with assistance of Stepping Stone Day School and Office of Early Education, New York City. Available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/A9F48CEA-25FE-4BC5-81C9-8D2104A35525/11231/UPKand4410IntegratingFunding2.pdf>.
17. Figures on special needs students available in report from State Aid Subcommittee, New York State Board of Regents, "2010—11 Regents State Aid Proposal: Support for UPK, and Benefits of High Performance School Buildings," September 1, 2009. <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/September2009/0909monthmat-new.html#stateaid>
18. The state does mandate bilingual education and supports for ELL students in K-12, but does not extend the same mandate to cover Pre-K students. New York City estimates that as many as 42% of students enrolled in early care and education programs are living in homes where English is not the primary language. The city's education officials report that 165 languages are spoken in the homes of its public school students.
19. Latino Coalition for Early Care and Education Report: Building on Latino Children's Language and Culture," Prepared by Luis Reyes, Krystal Reyes, Vanessa Ramos and Ursulina Ramirez. Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2008. Available at <http://www.chcfinc.org/policy/BuildingOnLatinoChildrensLanguageAndCultureReport.pdf>.
20. See, for example, "Early Education for Student Achievement in a Global Community," the Board of Regents latest policy statement on early childhood education, which lays out a birth to third grade strategy, with Pre-K for three- and four-year-olds. In the intervening years, the Regents have continued to call for Pre-K expansion and improvements.
21. See also Clive Belfield's report on New York State which estimates that full implementation of Pre-K could save the state up to \$828 million in reduced need for remedial services and grade retention, available at [www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/.../researchbriefing\\_blefield\\_report\\_001.pdf](http://www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/.../researchbriefing_blefield_report_001.pdf).
22. Several national studies provide analysis for arriving at a per-child cost of quality programming, including "The Cost of Providing Preschool to 3- and 4-Year-olds," compiled by the National Institute for Early Education Research; available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org); "Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs," Pre-K Now Research Series, May 2008; and "What's the Cost of Quality" from the Foundation for Child Development, available at [http://www.fcd-us.org/usr\\_doc/PreK3rd-WhatIsThePriceTag.pdf](http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/PreK3rd-WhatIsThePriceTag.pdf). The Center for Children's Initiatives in New York City has also provided several New York-specific estimates on the cost of part-day, full-day and full-day, year-round service available at [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy).
23. The Freeport, Long Island, school district, for example, pays for seven buses for a special run for about 250 half-day pre-k students which costs about \$500,000 annually and is paid for out of local revenues. That cost is the equivalent of about half of the \$1 million the city receives in state aid for Pre-K services.
24. See materials prepared on state aid for Board of Regents meeting, September 2009, for more background on maintenance of effort



- formula and penalties it imposes on districts that add local or federal funding to maintain enrollment.
25. See Barnett et al, "Is More Better? The Effects of Full Day v. Half Day" and "The Universal vs. Targeted Debate: Should the United States have Preschool for All?" Both are available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org)
  26. See also "Research Briefing: The Full-Day Advantage," available at [www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/.../researchbriefing\\_full.pdf](http://www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/.../researchbriefing_full.pdf). See also Robin, Kenneth B. et al, "Is More Better? The Effects of Full-Day vs. Half-Day Preschool on Early School Achievement." Available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).
  27. See report from Early Years Institute, "Windows of Opportunity:" available at [www.eyi.org/data/prekreport2009.pdf](http://www.eyi.org/data/prekreport2009.pdf).
  28. New York City created about 1,000 new full-day seats in community-based centers with contracts with the Administration for Children's Services. Centers without ACS contracts were not eligible. The number of children served in this initiative declined in the 2008-09 school year, as the city's tax revenues fell.
  29. The Targeted Pre-K program started in 1966 as Experimental Pre-K; services were comprehensive, including health, mental health and family support.
  30. Data provided by Howard as part of the assessments from Rochester's federal Early Reading First initiative.
  31. Mitchell, Anne, "The State with Two Prekindergarten Programs: A Look at Pre-kindergarten Education in New York State (1928-2003), available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).
  32. The widely cited Acebedarian and Perry Preschool research was available at the time. Since then, even more comprehensive research and reports have emerged and are summarized in Shonkoff et al.
  33. See Alvarado report, available at [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy/publications](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy/publications).
  34. Research and reports indicate that without careful consideration and sufficient engagement of local service providers and parents, existing capacity and public investments may not be used efficiently or in ways that meet children's and families' needs. See for example, McCabe et al, "Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Early Care and Education in Rural New York," published by the New York State Center for Rural Schools, Cornell University.
  35. Shonkoff, J and Phillips, D., "From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development." National Academy of Sciences, Washington, DC, 2000.
  36. New York's Action Plan for Young Children and Families, created by Winning Beginning, New York, in 2001, included services for babies, toddlers and their families. Available at [www.winningbeginningny.org](http://www.winningbeginningny.org)
  37. These centers are coordinated by the state Early Care and Learning Council. To learn more, visit [www.ealrcareandlearning.org](http://www.ealrcareandlearning.org).
  38. Component 2 of the Board of Regents 2006 policy statement on early childhood education.
  39. In New York City, 90% of the calls to child care resource and referral agencies in 2009 are for care for babies and toddlers. Yet the city has only one regulated slot for every five families in need of one. Data shows that most children under the age of three are in license-exempt care, that is, in settings that are not inspected and mostly lack providers with special training in caring for infants and toddlers.
  40. "New York Head Start by the Numbers, 2008, Center for Law and Social Policy. For New York City, see 2008 CCI Primer available at [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org) See also report from New York State Council on Children and Families, "New York State Early Childhood Data Report: The Health and Well-Being of New York's Youngest Children," 2008.
  41. Illinois' Birth to Five Early Childhood Block Grant includes an 11% set-aside for infants and toddlers. To learn more, visit [http://www.ounceofprevention.org/includes/tiny\\_mce/plugins/filemanager/files/Early%20Education%20History.pdf](http://www.ounceofprevention.org/includes/tiny_mce/plugins/filemanager/files/Early%20Education%20History.pdf) See also "Inspiring Innovation: Creative State Financing Structures for Infant-Toddler Services at [www.ounceofprevention.org/research/pdfs/InspiringInnovation.pdf](http://www.ounceofprevention.org/research/pdfs/InspiringInnovation.pdf). The Zero to Three Website, [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org), also includes extensive links to research on development during the early years. Prenatal Through PreK: Building Bright Futures is an especially useful look at how policy makers can include supports for infants and toddlers in state pre-k initiatives. Also see Building Bridges from Prekindergarten to Infants and Toddlers on the growing concern among scientists and public policy makers that many children under 3 may need more support to make their Pre-K experience more effective.
  43. Professional in New York City's Department of Education who has worked on pre-k since its launch.
  44. Interviews with pre-k coordinators, state education officials, community programs across the state. Syracuse school district provided data on the range of its services.
  45. State education officials now call for a system that starts in Pre-K and continues into higher education, or P-20 system.
  46. Assuming that about half the community-based classrooms already had qualified teachers, with about 500 in study plans. If one assumes that a new teacher certified in early childhood education was needed at the head of every new Pre-K class, the estimate jumps to about 5000 new teachers. Estimates based on enrollment of about 100,000 four-year-olds, spread evenly across classes and half the enrollment in community settings.
  47. See J. Shonkoff and D. Phillips, eds, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: the Science of Early Childhood Development*, Washington, D.C. National Academy Press, 2002, for an overview of the latest research on the need for quality early childhood programs that support healthy development. See also N. Halfon, E. Shulman and M. Hochstein, *Brain Development in Early Childhood: Building Community Systems for Young Children*. UCLA: Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, August 2001 for an overview of the need to systematically address the needs of the whole child.
  48. Barnett, W.S. "Low Wages =Low Quality: Solving the Real Preschool Teacher Crisis" available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org) advises policy makers and parents that staff compensation is the best indicator of quality in an early childhood program.
  49. To learn more about the TEACH initiative, visit [www. http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach.html](http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach.html).
  50. *Winning Beginning NY's 'Early Childhood Workforce Development Program*, proposed in 2006-07 and 2007-08. The coalition pressed for the loan forgiveness provisions of their proposal again in 2009.



51. See "Abbott Preschool: 10 Years Later: An Added Bonus: The Educational Success of New Jersey's Preschool Teachers," Association for Children of New Jersey, January, 2009. Available at [www.acnj.org/main.asp?uri=1003&di=1343&dt=4&chi=2](http://www.acnj.org/main.asp?uri=1003&di=1343&dt=4&chi=2)
52. Frede reports on Abbott, Cindy Gallagher, NIEER and NAEYC.
53. To learn more, visit [www.state.nj.us/njded/ece/](http://www.state.nj.us/njded/ece/).
54. See especially Kagan's analysis in "Back to Basics: Essential Components of An American Early Care and Education System," September, 2001.
55. New York City, for example, recently secured permission to transfer state Pre-K funding from the Department of Education to the Administration for Children's services with the goal of simplifying the contracting process for early childhood centers that also had contacts with ACS. Many ACS centers experienced substantial reductions in their child care funding as a result of this process. During city budget negotiations, city officials estimated that child care funding was reduced by \$12 million overall under the new contracting system. Program directors report that the reduction in funding had substantial impact on service delivery, reducing staff and coverage in some classrooms as well as enrichments designed to improve educational outcomes for children.
56. See Alvarado report of the New York City Council Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) Part II, available at [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy/publications](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy/publications).
57. Memorandum from James Kadamus, Deputy Commissioner of State Education Department, to school superintendents, March 1998 in reference to regulations regarding staff qualifications for state Pre-K program (regulation 151-1.5; subpart, staff qualifications, issued in 1998).
58. See Alvarado report for New York City Council, available at [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy/publications](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/policy/publications).
59. *Winning Beginning NY* prepared a proposal for such a fund in 2006, as a key part of an Early Childhood Workforce Development Program. Available at [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/publications/workforce\\_development\\_WBNI.pdf](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/publications/workforce_development_WBNI.pdf).
60. See Belfield and Schwartz study, available at [www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/elcnews\\_071210\\_CostOfPreschool.pdf](http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/elcnews_071210_CostOfPreschool.pdf).
61. For example, New York City's Department of Education contracting office briefly imposed a practice of giving community programs extra points for submitting the lowest bid in their neighborhood. More recently, the city adopted a new contracting process aimed at streamlining the contracting process for Pre-K, child care and Head Start funding. One outcome of the process was a reduction of \$12 million in child care funding for centers across the city. Program directors report this has impacted service delivery, including staffing and enrichment services designed to improve educational outcomes for children.
62. National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force. See Schultz, "Tackling PK-3 Assessment and Accountability Challenges: Guidance from the National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force."
63. National Association of Elementary School Principals, "Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do," 2005, 2008. Available at [web.naesp.org/misc/ECLC\\_ExecSum.pdf](http://web.naesp.org/misc/ECLC_ExecSum.pdf).
64. Interviews with early childhood coordinators and program directors in New York City, 2009.
65. The aggregate data is available from the Office of Head Start's Program Information Report (PIR).
66. For more information on the issues of data collection on infants and toddlers and the impact on assessing need, status and services of children under 3, see *Unequal From the Start*, a report from New York Zero to Three Network, available at [www.nyzerotothree.org](http://www.nyzerotothree.org).
67. See, for example, Child Trends' series on the issue at [http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child\\_Trends-2009\\_5\\_21\\_RB\\_earlycare.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_5_21_RB_earlycare.pdf).
68. For an overview, visit <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/ecarefunding.html>.
69. Several policy and advocacy groups are tracking federal funding opportunities, including the Center for Law and Social Policy, Pre-K Now and the Birth to Five Policy Alliance. For a quick overview, visit [http://publications.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/preschool/ece09\\_factsheet\\_fundingopportunities.pdf](http://publications.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/preschool/ece09_factsheet_fundingopportunities.pdf).
70. See McCabe et al, "Universal Pre Kindergarten, Early Care and Education in Rural New York at <http://www.ny ruralschools.org/downloads/REAC%20Policy%20Brief.pdf> and Early Years Institute report, "Windows of Opportunity" available at [www.eyi.org/data/prekreport2009.pdf](http://www.eyi.org/data/prekreport2009.pdf).
71. See Masse, L. N. and Barnett, W. S, "A Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention." National Institute for Early Education Research, New Brunswick, NJ available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org). See also, Grunewald and Rolnick, "Early childhood development=Economic Development," for summary of benefits of investment in early childhood education, available at [http://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/economists/staff\\_display\\_pubs\\_papers](http://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/economists/staff_display_pubs_papers)
72. See Belfield study, [www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/documents/belfield\\_report\\_001.pdf](http://www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/documents/belfield_report_001.pdf).
73. See "Leading Early Learning Communities: Standards for What Principles for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do," from the National Association of Elementary Principals, 2008 at <http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/Pdfs/LLC2-ES.pdf>; Also Wat and Gayl, *Beyond the School Yard* at [http://preknow.org/documents/pkn\\_collaboration\\_rept\\_final.pdf](http://preknow.org/documents/pkn_collaboration_rept_final.pdf); and Friedman et al, "Windows of Opportunity," available at [www.eyi.org/data/prek/report2009.pdf](http://www.eyi.org/data/prek/report2009.pdf).
74. Ibid.
75. See Barnett et al, "The Universal vs. Targeted Debate: Should the United States Have Preschool for All?" available at [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).



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*Winning Beginning NY* is a statewide coalition working to inform policy makers and the public about the many benefits of early care and learning including home visiting, child care and Pre-K. The coalition aims to build a broad-based constituency to make investment in quality early care and learning a top public priority in New York State.

*Winning Beginning NY* is co-convened by the Center for Children's Initiatives, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, the Early Care & Learning Council, and the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children.

For more information on the recommendations, contact Betty Holcomb, CCI Policy Director at [bholcomb@centerforchildrensinitiatives.org](mailto:bholcomb@centerforchildrensinitiatives.org).



150 State Street, 4th Floor, Albany, NY 12207  
518-463-1896 or 518-690-4217  
[info@winningbeginningny.org](mailto:info@winningbeginningny.org) • [www.winningbeginningny.org](http://www.winningbeginningny.org)

