

# New York City Early Care & Education Task Force Recommendations



**Bill de Blasio, Mayor**

**Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**

**Gladys Carrion, Commissioner, Administration for Children's Services**

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# NYC Early Care and Education Task Force Recommendations

*The Mayor appointed a diverse group of stakeholders from government, the provider community, intermediary organizations and advocacy groups. Through spirited deliberation over its four meetings from October 2014 through February 2015, the Task Force considered a wide range of opinion, data, experience, theory and best practice to develop these recommendations. The Task Force fully supports these recommendations and strongly urges the Mayor to enact a multi-year plan to achieve them.*

*NYC can ensure that every child has access to quality early care and learning. To do so, we strongly believe that NYC must move as rapidly as possible to a coordinated and aligned early care and education system that is good for children, easy for families to navigate, and efficient and streamlined for providers of services and for City agencies. By expanding the capacity of that system, we can reduce and ultimately eliminate inequality of access to quality programs for NYC's young children.<sup>1</sup>*

*To that end, we make these recommendations to work smarter now and in future.<sup>2</sup>*

# Work Towards a High Quality System for Children Now

## Recommendation 1:

Continue to develop and expand a common Quality Assurance System among all City agencies building on the work in progress among ACS, DOHMH and DOE.

### Supporting Initiatives

- a. Establish a common Quality Assurance System to provide efficient monitoring and effective quality improvement

#### **Core components of Quality Assurance System:**

- i. Align monitoring procedures and program assessment content (the standards to be met and measures used for assessment).
  - ii. Use information technology to streamline all aspects of the system, e.g., eliminating duplicative evaluations and sharing results among agencies.
  - iii. Provide appropriate staffing across all City agencies.
  - iv. Support data-driven continuous quality improvement (CQI) in a virtuous cycle of effective quality improvement practice – “getting better at getting better” – both within City agencies and in ECE settings, and
  - v. Support cultural and linguistic competency among providers to ensure needs of diverse families and children are met.
- b. Within the Quality Assurance System, identify common quality indicators that can be reported to the public/consumers and can be used to measure year-by-year quality progress.
  - c. Incorporate into the Quality Assurance System effective methods of program quality improvement for all types of settings: schools, centers, family child care homes (large and small), independent homes and those in networks, single-site agencies, multi-site agencies, multi-service agencies.

- d. Phase in the Quality Assurance System by focusing first on all contracted sites (centers, schools and family child care settings, whether contracted via ACS or DOE).
- e. Plan expansion of the Quality Assurance System to include all settings that receive public funds, i.e., those that currently receive vouchers.
- f. To streamline regulatory processes and ease burdens on providers while the Quality Assurance System is being developed, immediately (FY15) expand the current effort to create a multi-agency “quick response” team of representatives from DOHMH, FDNY, ACS, DOE, DOB that can speedily convene to provide simultaneous responses to providers regarding inspections, building condition, code issues, etc. The team can convene at City Hall, to work out initial protocols, build on past successes and move towards a more integrated regulatory process.



## Recommendation 2:

### Cultivate and compensate a high-quality ECE workforce in all settings

#### Supporting Initiatives

- a. Align existing professional development resources to increase efficient use of resources and focus on achievement of credentials, degrees and certification throughout the ECE workforce, in all settings.
  - i. Accelerate completion of study plans using the most effective methods, including models currently in progress.
  - ii. Work with colleges to ensure sufficient provision of ECE coursework leading to degrees and certification (e.g., Birth through Grade Two teacher certification).
  - iii. Ensure the content of professional development is consistent with NYS Early Learning Guidelines<sup>3</sup> and current knowledge of best practice, especially supporting dual language development and social and emotional wellbeing, as well as family engagement.<sup>4</sup>
  - iv. Move all staff into ASPIRE (or a similar system) to gain an accurate picture of the qualifications of the workforce.
- b. To attract and retain the best workforce for NYC's children, compensation including benefits, must be addressed.
- c. Building on the commitment of PreK for All for comparable compensation for qualified PreK teachers in community-based early childhood settings, develop a plan to address compensation, including benefits, in all settings receiving public funds over a multiple year timeframe.

## Recommendation 3:

### Increase financial stability of contracted settings (EarlyLearn)

#### Supporting Initiatives

- a. Revise the rate structure to reflect costs in comparable markets (e.g., facility costs, fiscal administration, outreach/marketing expenses, regulatory compliance, etc.).
- b. Work toward full utilization of contracted settings via community outreach and recruitment of families, easing the application and enrollment process and other improvements and efficiencies.
- c. Work toward a contracting system that sustains and incentivizes higher quality programs.

## Recommendation 4:

Strive for 'every parent an informed parent'

### Supporting Initiatives

- a. Across City agencies, communicate clear and consistent information to all families on quality ECE and all care and learning options for young children, with additional support available if requested by the family.
- b. Establish a common interactive database of all ECE options accessible to all NYC families via [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) as well as agency websites (DOHMH, HRA, ACS, DOE) and community organizations (the NYC Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium). This can be expanded from the revamped ECE section of the ACS website that will soon offer user-friendly, smartphone-accessible guidance and information on EarlyLearn, Head Start, PreK for All and child care. Mapping capacity will support search by zipcode and vacancies. This site will include an improved eligibility calculator with clear guidance on what a family is eligible for and how to access including application via this website. Developing NYC's common interactive database can benefit from the Philadelphia map of options with quality criteria [www.childcaremap.org](http://www.childcaremap.org) that was created in part with support from private philanthropy. Given the language diversity of NYC families, accessible means in multiple languages.
- c. Review existing research, such as the National Survey of ECE and the application of behavioral economics to social policy, to better understand parent choice behavior generally and the influences on it. Review existing NYC data specifically to understand the choice behavior of NYC parents and use the results to inform and improve consumer education. Begin with a pilot in FY2016.
- d. Revise marketing practices to align with parent preferences and behavior. Consider parent preferences when developing new ECE resources for young children in NYC.
- e. Apply lessons learned from PreK for All, especially for outreach to parents.

# Work Towards a High Quality System for Children in the Future

## Recommendation 5:

**Expand access to quality.** As PreK for All expands to serve all NYC 4-year-olds with funding from public education sources, re-direct public funds previously allocated to 4-year-olds to younger children, and leverage new resources to expand access to quality ECE for low-income children 0-3 years old.

### Supporting Initiatives

- a. In the upcoming EarlyLearn RFP – establish an accurate rate structure based on demonstrated costs in comparable markets (e.g., facility costs, fiscal administration, outreach/marketing expenses, regulatory compliance, leases, etc.), incorporating enrollment (demonstrated gains in utilization of capacity) and attendance targets and quality program models.
- b. When a state-wide or City-wide publicly reported quality indicator system is established, consider revising subsidy co-pays to reflect quality (lower copays for higher quality) to encourage families to choose higher quality.
- c. Set annual targets for expansion of quality capacity and continue to expand access to quality ECE with public funds, leveraging federal, State and local sources.

## Recommendation 6:

Expand the City's common Quality Assurance System. Eventually, expand quality assurance to reach any setting in which NYC's young children are served, regardless of income.

### Supporting Initiatives

- a. Support the State to adopt and fund a quality indicator initiative<sup>5</sup> for regulated settings by 2016; the City can choose to integrate the quality indicator system once it has been established.
- b. Expand all, or aspects of, quality assurance to all settings that are regulated by the City.



## Recommendation 7:

### Continue to grow a High-quality Workforce

#### Supporting Initiatives

- a. Continue to accelerate the completion of study plans, so that all young children will have qualified teachers, and move eventually to a fully credentialed workforce.
- b. Expand higher education access to match the actual need for new teachers, as retention of quality teachers stabilizes.





## **Recommendation 8:**

**Report progress**

**Supporting Initiative**

Develop metrics, to be reported annually to the public and highlighted in the Mayor’s Management Report, on progress toward the actions described above, e.g., children enrolled in high-quality settings, families choosing higher quality settings, increase in the certified ECE workforce, increase in comparable compensation, increase in proportion of settings covered by quality assurance system.

## Summary of Recommendations

<b>WORK TOWARDS A HIGH QUALITY SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN NOW</b>
<b>1. Continue to develop and expand Common Quality Assurance (QA) system</b>
a. Establish a common QA System to provide efficient monitoring and effective quality improvement
b. Identify common quality indicators that can be reported
c. Incorporate into the QA System effective methods of program quality improvement for all types of settings
d. Phase in QA System by focusing first on all contracted sites
e. Plan expansion of QA System to include all settings that receive public funds
f. Immediately (FY15) expand current effort to create a multi-agency “quick response” team to ease regulatory burdens
<b>2. Cultivate and compensate a high-quality ECE workforce in all settings</b>
a. Align existing professional development resources
b. Address compensation, including benefits
c. Develop plan to address compensation in all settings receiving public funds within a reasonable timeframe
<b>3. Increase financial stability of contracted settings (EarlyLearn)</b>
a. Revise rate structure to better reflect costs
b. Work toward full utilization of contracted settings
c. Work toward a reimbursement rate that rewards higher quality programs.
<b>4. Strive for ‘every parent an informed parent’</b>
a. Communicate clear and consistent information to all families
b. Establish a common interactive searchable database of all ECE options accessible to all NYC families
c. Review existing research to better understand parent choice behavior
d. Revise marketing practices to align with parent preferences and behavior
<b>WORK TOWARDS A HIGH QUALITY SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE</b>
<b>5. Expand access to quality</b>
a. In the upcoming EarlyLearn RFP – establish an accurate rate structure
b. Consider revising subsidy co-pays to reflect quality to encourage families to choose higher quality.
c. Set annual targets for expansion of quality capacity
<b>6. Expand the City’s common Quality Assurance System</b>
a. Reach all early care and education settings in which low-income children are served
b. Expand to reach any setting in which NYC’s young children are served, regardless of income
<b>7. Continue to grow a high-quality ECE workforce</b>
a. Continue to accelerate completion of study plans
b. Expand higher education access
<b>8. Report progress</b>
a. Develop metrics to be reported annually on progress toward the actions described above.

## NYC Early Care and Education Task Force Members

Name	Affiliation
<b>Co-Chairs</b>	
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Gladys Carrion	Commissioner, Administration for Children's Services
<b>Members</b>	
Richard Altman	Jewish Child Care Association
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Andrea Anthony	Day Care Council
Carolyn Baker	US Health and Human Services, Head Start Region II Office
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Constance Brown	Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Early Childhood Education Center
Lisette Camilo	Mayor's Office of Contract Services
Alan van Capelle	Educational Alliance
Sherry Cleary	CUNY Early Childhood Professional Development Institute
Alexis Confer	Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives
Frank Cresciullo	Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Lisa Fitzpatrick	Human Resources Administration
Jeremy Hoffman	United Federation of Teachers
Jennifer Jones Austin	Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
Nancy Kolben	Center for Children's Initiatives
Patti S. Lieberman	A.L. Mailman Family Foundation
Jennifer March	Citizens Committee for Children
Megan McAllister	Altman Foundation
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Janice Molnar	NYS Office of Children and Family Services
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Gail Nayowith	
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Margarita Rosa	Grand Street Settlement
Winona Schulerbrandt	ACS Head Start Policy Council
Marla Simpson	Brooklyn Community Services
Danielle Sullivan	Parents 4 Parents
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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> More than 500,000 children under age five live in NYC; 60% of them have working families, or about 310,000 children (KidsCOUNT). The formal (regulated) system can accommodate about 227,000 children under 5 (DOHMH). Pre-K for All serves about 50,000 4-year-olds and public funds support another 75,000 children under five (DOE, ACS, HRA).

<sup>2</sup> The Task Force sought to recommend only high impact items.

<sup>3</sup> NYS Early Learning Guidelines intentionally complement and coordinate with the state's Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework and the New York State Learning Standards. See <http://ccf.ny.gov/files/7813/8177/1285/ELF.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> A holistic definition of family engagement meets the need of both vulnerable children and their parents by building on education, economic, social and health well-being support. This helps children focus more in school while their parents learn as well. Parenting skills promote the whole family continuum.

<sup>5</sup> For example, QUALITYstarsNY.