



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
February 21, 2019  
Contact: [mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov)

**AS A RESULT OF NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
PARTNERSHIP WITH CUNY, NEARLY 50 LOW-INCOME NYC PARENTS HAVE  
EARNED CERTIFICATES ALLOWING THEM TO WORK IN EARLY HEAD START  
PROGRAMS**

*Certificate is Fully Funded & Can Be Used Towards College Credits*

*Program is a Win-Win for NYC: Provides Job Opportunities for Low-Income Families & Means  
Highly-Qualified Teachers to Work with Children in Head Start*

NEW YORK, NY – Today, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and CUNY School of Professional Studies (CUNY SPS) announced that nearly 50 parents of children enrolled in ACS Head Start have earned their Child Development Associate (CDA) Certificate through a program launched by the City in 2016, allowing them to work with children in the EarlyLearn Early Head Start and Head Start programs. The Certificate program is fully funded by ACS and other partners and can be used towards securing employment in the early childhood field and obtaining an undergraduate college degree, which some parents have gone on to accomplish.

"Who knows our children in Head Start better than the parents of children in Head Start? At ACS, we're committed to empowering families by providing them the resources and support they need to thrive. That's why, in 2016, ACS and CUNY launched a win-win initiative that would open doors for low-income families, all while providing additional highly-qualified teachers to work with our little ones. I'm so proud that, because of this program, nearly 50 parents have earned their certificate and can go on to working in Head Start sites or earning their college degree," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.**

"ACS saw the possibilities in their Head Start parents and together we provided the opportunity and support for these wonderful individuals to pursue a credit-bearing CDA that articulates to several other colleges at CUNY," **said Sherry Cleary, Executive Director NY Early Childhood Professional Development Institute- CUNY.** "Completion of this first rung of the early childhood career ladder makes it possible for these successful candidates to teach young children in high quality early childhood programs while earning college degrees."

ACS's EarlyLearn NYC programs offer high quality early care and education programs including Head Start and Early Head Start. EarlyLearn is publicly funded for eligible families and provides early childhood care and education five days a week, up to ten hours per day, 12 months of the year. EarlyLearn programs are offered in two types of settings: center-based care is available for children from six-weeks through four-years-old; and home-based care is available for

children from six-weeks through three-years-old through family child care networks. Pre-kindergarten is offered to all four-year-old children in partnership with the NYC Department of Education. EarlyLearn's Early Head Start and Head Start programs serves children from birth through four-years-old in family and center-based settings.

EarlyLearn NYC programs serve as the foundation of the ACS Division of Child and Family Well-being. This division focuses on a two-generation approach that works to create a solid foundation of success for children and families by leveraging partner relationships to build on the strengths of diverse families: training parent leaders; supporting family engagement; and, connecting families to community resources. The goal of the division is to prevent families from having to engage with the child welfare system. The division works to reduce exposure to toxic stress and adversity; provide children, families and communities the tools to mitigate adversity; and increase protective factors in high need communities. This is part of an ongoing effort at ACS to disrupt disparity and break down barriers to promote opportunities and establish accessible resources for New York City families.

The [Child Development Associate \(CDA\) Certificate](#) is the most widely recognized national credential in early childhood education and an important stepping stone on the career pathway for many early childhood educators. The certificate is designed for preschool teachers, childcare workers, and other individuals looking to work in Early Childhood Education. The nationally recognized CDA Credential has been accepted as a state requirement for working in many early childhood centers. Graduates of the program obtain 12 undergraduate college credits that can be put towards obtaining an associates or undergraduate college degree.

In 2016, ACS and CUNY SPS, in partnership with CUNY's Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, began to offer all Head Start parents throughout the city the opportunity to apply for the CDA certificate at no-cost. ACS pays full tuition, application fees and fingerprinting. By this summer, close to 65 parents will have earned their CDA Certificate; thus far, 43 parents have successfully earned their CDA Certificate and 21 parents are on track to graduate this summer.

###