

Children (and their families)

Are part of a system of early learning

That must be high-quality in order to produce certain outcomes

QUALITYstarsNY is a mechanism to drive, assess, and ensure that quality

QUALITYstarsNY works in conjunction with accreditation, professional development, increased workforce compensation, and other program supports

Elevator Speech: Children deserve appropriately-funded and professionally supported early learning programs that promote their optimal development and learning.

Quality Ask: Invest \$20M in increasing quality in early learning through implementation of quality standards such as QUALITYstarsNY.

Short-term Messages:

- New York State must provide universal access to quality.
 - Potential Response: We can't do both; there isn't enough money.
 - Our response (1): We must do both; these things aren't mutually exclusive.
 - Our response (2): New York State has a \$2B surplus.

- An 86 cent investment in high-quality early learning returns \$1.86 to the local economy—more than the retail, construction, or manufacturing sectors.
 - Potential Response: How can that be?
 - Our Response: The early learning workforce spends money they earn locally; programs buy supplies and services from within their community.

- High-quality early learning programs allow parents (especially lower income parents) to work.
 - Potential Response: So you want more subsidies?
 - Our Response: New York State must increase subsidies at the same time that it increases the quality of programs serving families that receive subsidies; lower income children are even more in need of high-quality programs and even more likely to be in lower-quality programs.

- Working families (especially those coming to New York from other states) expect high-quality early learning.
 - Potential Response: Don't families just want dependable, safe care?
 - Our Response: No. Other states (MA, NJ) provide higher quality programs. If New York State is serious about recruiting workers to the tech and start-up industries, it must provide programs of similar quality.

Long-term Messages:

- Pay now or pay later— in criminal justice and healthcare costs.
 - Potential Response: We need to take care of the children currently in our juvenile justice/healthcare system(s); we can't worry about those who might be there tomorrow.
 - Our Response: New York State must serve the children in those systems while investing in the children not yet in those systems. An investment in prevention will pay dividends.
- High-quality early learning will produce a future workforce with the skills (including soft skills) that employers are looking for (and that they say are currently lacking).
 - Potential Response: Shouldn't we invest in multiple pathways to graduation and initiatives like career and technical education instead?
 - Our Response (1): We must invest along the education continuum. Far less public funding is directed at children birth to five than on any other age group (\$3,503 vs. \$13,796)
 - Our Response (2): The groundwork for all future learning and social skills is set before a child enters Kindergarten. Research shows that interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) is generally in place by third grade.
- High-quality early learning increases high school graduation and college completion rates.
 - Potential Response: We don't spend enough on K-12.
 - Our Response (1): New York State must invest in education along the continuum; these are not mutually exclusive decisions. Far less public funding is directed at children birth to five than on any other age group (\$3,503 vs. \$13,796)
 - Our Response (2): Investing earlier decreases the remediation that New York currently spends millions on.

QUALITYstarsNY (Internal) Messages:

- **Message 1A:** All of New York's children deserve to be in high-quality early childhood education programs.
- **Details:** The research is clear: high-quality early childhood education mitigates the achievement gap and has life-long benefits. Of the 331 programs that were rated using QUALITYstarsNY program standards, only 1 program was rated as a 5 star program meaning that it provides the highest quality of care. Ninety-two programs received a 4 star rating, 48 received three stars, 88 received 2 stars, and fully 98 programs were rated as a 1 star program, meaning that they meet few to no standards beyond basic regulations.
- **Message 1B:** QUALITYstarsNY, with an initial investment of \$20M, will improve the quality of educational programming received by more than 50,000 children participating in a range of early childhood education programs.
- **Details:** For less than \$400 per child, a comprehensive, research based effort (QUALITYstarsNY) will be implemented to improve the quality of services of children participating in early childhood education programs across New York State. This effort will be directed at improving the quality of services by all types of early childhood education programs including family and center-based child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, Prekindergarten, Nursery Schools, Early Intervention Group Developmental Services, and Preschool Special Education Programs.
- **Message 2:** QUALITYstarsNY provides clear communication to parents about the quality of early care and education programs and providers so that they have the information they need to choose the program that is right for their children.
- **Details:** Once QUALITYstarsNY is implemented and programs have been assessed and rated, information on the star ratings will be made available and parents will be able to access detailed information on the factors (e.g., staff qualifications and training, program curriculum, learning environment) that led to the rating.
- **Message 3:** QUALITYstarsNY program standards were developed by leaders in early childhood education from across New York State who represent a broad cross-section of early childhood education programs and services.
- **Details:** QUALITYstarsNY program standards build upon New York's strong regulatory foundation and serve to guide programs and providers in their efforts to provide the best possible services for children and families. These standards are based on research on the characteristics of high-quality services that are known to lead to improved outcomes for children.

- **Message 4:** QUALITYstarsNY assigns a Quality Improvement Specialist to every participating program and provider to guide the program's involvement in QUALITYstarsNY, which includes assisting them in conducting a self-assessment, and developing and implementing a quality improvement plan.
- **Details:** All quality improvement plans are customized to meet the specific needs of each site. Depending on the needs of the program, these supports include mentoring site leadership to implement quality improvements in the administration of the program and the provision of high quality classroom services; individual and group coaching of classroom staff on issues such as classroom management and child assessment; and support in selecting and implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum, equipment, and learning materials.
- **Message 5:** QUALITYstarsNY uses a sophisticated data management system to track program progress, maximize existing resources, and to hold all components of the project accountable.
- **Details:** State agencies can access data and reports that provide detail about program improvement, costs, and time invested to keep track of the on-going value of a quality rating and improvement system such as QUALITYstarsNY. This promises value to agency leadership, policy-makers, and legislators.