

## NEW YORK

## FACTS: SCHOOL READINESS IN NEW YORK

## DEFINITION

School Readiness refers to the field within Early Childhood Education that prepares children, aged 2½ to 6, to participate in and derive maximum benefit from kindergarten, laying the foundation for continuous success in school. School Readiness programs address language development, cognitive skills, general knowledge, approaches to learning, and social and emotional skills.

% of children under six that are low-income<sup>1</sup>

40%



Avg. annual cost for a 4 year-old child to attend a childcare center<sup>2</sup>

\$10,500

% of public school 4th graders at or above reading level<sup>3</sup>

	Low-income	Average
Reading	25%	48%

\*Income refers to free/reduced lunch eligibility

## SOCIAL ISSUE INDICATORS

SIR regards the following as the most important indicators in assessing the short- and long-term progress towards closing the school readiness gap for at-risk children. New York does not disaggregate school readiness program attendance by income. Uniform strategies for accessing program quality are unavailable. A quality rating and improvement system called QUALITYstarsNY is currently being developed.

Access<sup>4</sup>  57%\*

Quality QUALITYstarsNY is currently being field tested in 13 communities. Data is not yet available.

\*Access refers to the % of all 4 year-olds served by State Pre-K, Special Education, and Head Start

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NEW YORK

## NEW YORK STATE OFFERS FREE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS OPEN TO ALL FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

In 1997 New York passed the Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) legislation to create free preschool programs open to all four-year-olds, regardless of socioeconomic status. The following describe the state of the UPK legislation:

- The UPK legislation did not afford priority access for low-income children, nor did it create a program for three-year-olds
- Nearly 120,000 children—more than 50% of the four-year-old population—remain on the statewide UPK waitlist<sup>5</sup>
- State childcare funding has declined since its \$929 million peak during the 2004-2005 fiscal year, effectively decreasing the number of subsidies available for low-income children not enrolled in a UPK program<sup>6</sup>

## NEW YORK STATE HAS TWO MAIN INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EARLY EDUCATION

Statewide a new quality rating and improvement system, QUALITYstarsNY, was recently launched. In New York City, Quality New York (QNY) seeks to improve program quality through accreditation.

- QUALITYstarsNY is a voluntary program that highlights high performing organizations that meet and exceed state regulations and standards, and assists underperforming organization to improve their quality through technical support and professional development.
  - While still in the testing phase with approximately 240 programs in 13 communities participating in the field test, a Project Report, including plans for statewide implementation, is expected in early 2011.
- Since its establishment in 2002, Quality New York (QNY) has assisted more than 150 New York City-based early education centers achieve accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
  - Yet, as of 2009, only 308 childcare centers out of 1,700 across the entire state had received national accreditation.<sup>7</sup>

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NEW YORK

- A 2004 Columbia University study estimated that investment in a universal early education program that serves all of New York State's children could save the state between \$555 million and \$828 million per year on K-12 education expenditures.<sup>8</sup>
- Approximately 40% to 60% of the monetary outlay necessary for completely universal early education would be offset as resources are redistributed from special education and grade repetition budgets.<sup>9</sup>
- The New York childcare sector enables more than 750,000 parents to go to work and earn more than \$30 billion annually which helps fuel the economy. Increasing state or local childcare expenditures by \$1 generates between \$1.52 and \$2.04 in the New York State economy.<sup>10</sup>

## THE SOCIAL IMPACT RESEARCH PROCESS

### SELECTING HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL READINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY

Social Impact Research (SIR) aggregates, analyzes, and disseminates information to help social impact investors identify and support high performing organizations working to solve particular social issues. To this end, SIR compiles three types of reports, designed to be read together. The social issue report provides investors with a broad overview of the social issue. The state report provides context about how the issue is being addressed in a particular state. The organization reports highlight high performing nonprofits in metropolitan areas working on the issue.

SIR focused on school readiness because it yields an extremely high social return for philanthropic investors. Given the substantial positive social and economic impacts associated with academic preparedness, investment in New York's school readiness programs proves critical in ensuring that all children possess the necessary skills to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

More than 22,000 childcare establishments operate across New York State. SIR examined more than 1,700 childcare centers operating in the New York City area working to improve school readiness through direct service. SIR determined that 17% of these centers are nonprofit, serving at-risk children, and demonstrate the core components of the SIR high impact approach: an education-based curriculum, parenting programs, and complementary services for basic needs. This list was narrowed down to 70 organizations through the analysis of publicly available financial documents and desk research. These 70 organizations were invited to participate in SIR's research. SIR then conducted interviews with participating organizations and administered an extensive survey in order to gain insight into the organization's program performance, social impact model, and overall health.

Each organization was analyzed using 31 discrete indicators within the following three categories:

- **Program Performance:** academic and socio-emotional curriculum, teacher quality, assessment tools related to student development, parent-school relationship, provision of services to parents, and quality of complementary services
- **Social and Economic Outcomes:** systemic change activities, community partnerships, strategies to replicate and/or scale and efforts to improve program quality
- **Organizational Health:** financial health and sustainability, board involvement, performance of the management team, and internal data collection process

During the analysis each organization was benchmarked by four analysts using SIR's five point scale for each indicator. Based on this analysis, SIR selected 7 recommended organizations in New York City, listed below. Social impact investors interested in supporting these high-performing nonprofits should refer to the organization reports to learn more about organizations in which to invest.

The list of recommended organizations below is not comprehensive and there may be other high performing school readiness organizations in New York City that did not submit data and therefore could not be analyzed.

### RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONS: EXAMPLES OF HIGH PERFORMERS

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	# SERVED IN 2009
Association to Benefit Children	Manhattan	223
Brooklyn Community Services	Brooklyn	90
Brooklyn Kindergarten Society	Brooklyn	313
Children's Aid Society	Manhattan	466
Graham Windham	Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan	456
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House	Manhattan	141
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation	Bronx	104

### ENDNOTES

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2. National Association of Child Care Resources & Referral Agencies, 2009 Child Care in the State of New York, retrieved June 22, 2010 from URL: <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/data/docs/NY.pdf>
3. Early Reading Indicators: 2010 Kids Count Special Report Datacenter. New York State Profile, retrieved October 29, 2010 from URL: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/stateprofile.aspx?state=NY&group=EarlyReading&loc=34&dt=1,3,2,4>
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5. Winning Beginning NY, Strengthening the Pre-K Investment: Next Steps to a Winning Beginning for Every Child in New York State, (2010), retrieved June 22, 2010 from URL: [http://winningbeginningny.org/publications/documents/strengthening\\_prek\\_investment\\_2010\\_8pgr.pdf](http://winningbeginningny.org/publications/documents/strengthening_prek_investment_2010_8pgr.pdf)
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8. Winning Beginning NY, Research Briefing: The Pre-K Payback, retrieved October 29, 2010 from URL: [http://www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/documents/belfield\\_execsummary.pdf](http://www.winningbeginningny.org/publications/documents/belfield_execsummary.pdf)
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10. Cornell University Linking Economic Development and Child Care Project, New York State Survey on Economic Development and Child Care, (2006), retrieved July 26, 2010 from URL: [http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/pdf/Survey\\_May17.pdf](http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/pdf/Survey_May17.pdf)