

“The research is powerful: If you invest in high-quality programs that coordinate with K-12 curricula and have mandatory teachers standards, the gains from early education are lasting. It’s also important that we focus on coordinating investments made in early childhood programs—such as Head Start—to ensure we are effectively using our funding, eliminating any waste and bolstering the structure of the education system.”

— Tim Kaine
United States Senator
from Virginia

“PLI gave me the confidence and taught me invaluable lessons about advocacy. I enjoy helping children and parents build their confidence and leadership skills.”

— Nishwe Williams
Parent Leadership Initiative
(PLI) Graduate

“What’s new isn’t the breadth of support for these policies, but the growing recognition that solutions are possible, as demonstrated by the wins for paid sick days in 35 locations and for paid family leave in four states, with many more on the horizon... Voters are seeing they can make a difference by banding together and by holding politicians accountable.”

— Ellen Bravo,
executive director of the
Family Values@Work
network of state coalitions

“...If we can improve and raise the quality of [child care] programs the children will benefit. In the long run, we’ll all benefit because children will be better prepared for life.”

— Joan Rocchetta,
Director of
Educational Services,
Child Care Council
of Suffolk

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM: BUILDING EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY NETWORKS

WHILE THE ECONOMY RECOVERED FROM THE RECESSION of 2008, children and families continue to struggle. The combination of significant budget cuts that were never restored and the polarized political climate make it difficult for advocates to implement existing programs, let alone advance new policies and funding to keep children and families strong.

Across New York State and Long Island, the need has never been greater to build diverse public, private and nonprofit networks to effectively advocate in support of children and get them on the right path in life. The Hagedorn Foundation partners with its grantees, advocacy networks and other allies to build an integrated movement to strengthen the public and political will for children and families. The focus of this collaborative effort is on:

- strengthening the learning network among early childhood advocates on Long Island and statewide, increasing the number of organizations that include early childhood issues as part of their policy agenda and creating a business voice for early childhood issues;
- increasing opportunities to coordinate policy agendas and advocacy efforts to inform local and state policy development, helping to obtain New York State Paid Family Leave and increasing funding for Home Visiting;
- establishing a coordinated federal advocacy voice to educate the New York congressional delegation on relevant policies and linking these efforts to a national movement-building strategy.

THE ROLE OF PARENT LEADERSHIP

Parents are critical to this advocacy effort. While most are deeply concerned about public policy decisions that affect their children’s schools, their communities and even the environment, many parents don’t know how policy and budget decisions are made.

The Hagedorn Foundation believes that the collective power of parents, especially when they are empowered with strong leadership skills, creates positive change in families and neighborhoods. By engaging groups of parents and harnessing their power, we enable them to make an impact on changing policies, practices and systems. As a result of their efforts, the structures designed to support families, including the early care and education system, are more likely to work for and with the families they serve.



Children stepping up to have their voices heard during Every Child Matters LI Step up for Kids Day event.

Parent leadership efforts supported by the Hagedorn Foundation and its grantees include:

- connecting parents and parent organizations across Long Island and New York State with the goal of creating parent-led actions that increase public and political awareness of the importance of infant mental health, developing quality child care and pre-k

programs, and creating an equitable and sufficient system of financing of early childhood development in New York State;

- strengthening parent-child relationships, and encouraging public and private agencies to work together to minimize family stress and improve outcomes for children.

Since 2005, the Hagedorn Foundation has granted \$13.7 million to programs focused on Families, Children and Youth, including \$7.7 million since 2009 to organizations that build diverse public, private and nonprofit networks that can effectively advocate for policy change in support of children, especially the most vulnerable.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors: Prepares and certifies 25 family service providers and parent leaders from across Long Island and NYC to implement a program that helps Latino parents understand their role in the development of and long-term impact on their children's educational outcomes.

American Sustainable Business Council: Works with Long Island businesses and business leaders to advocate for a sustainable economy based on bottom line principles of people, planet, and profit, which is good for Long Island businesses, families, and neighborhoods.

Parent Leadership Initiative Long Island: Builds leadership and advocacy skills for parents from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, throughout Suffolk and Nassau counties to assume leadership roles in their communi-

ties, become civically engaged, and build neighborhood networks.

Choice for All: Develops an early childhood system of care to increase school readiness, improve health outcomes, and increase investments in early childhood development in Roosevelt.

Every Child Matters Education Fund: Builds a broad network of coalitions, organizations, community groups and individuals to advance the Every Child Matters campaign on Long Island that educates Nassau and Suffolk policymakers on issues that affect children.

Family Support Center at Molloy College: Provides resources and technical assistance to organizations that serve families to help them incorporate "family support and engagement principles" into their organizations, and facilitates partnerships to build strong families and healthy communities across Long Island.

Family Values @ Work: Provides technical and capacity support to the NYS Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FMLI) campaign and general support for FV@W national efforts to grow a movement for family-friendly workplace policies such as paid sick days and family leave insurance.

The Long Island Pre-K Initiative, administered by Nassau BOCES: Expands high quality Pre-K programs in the Long Island region, targeting professional development, and improving program quality by strengthening partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations.

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy –produces reports and studies and works with the statewide home visiting coalition to advocate for a statewide universal screening and home visiting system for new parents.

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