

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, February 26, 2014
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION 130957 - Resolution calling on the
City of Philadelphia City Council Committee on
Education to hold hearings concerning the
social and economic benefits of early
childhood education in the City of
Philadelphia.

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good morning and thank you all for coming.

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We certainly notify all of my colleagues in their offices that we are going to begin this hearing. We have guests who are present, and we thank you all for coming.

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We're going to ask -- this is the Education Committee scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m. Again, we thank you all for coming.

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We'll ask the Clerk to read the title of the resolution.

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THE CLERK: Calling on the City of Philadelphia City Council Committee on Education to hold hearings concerning the social and economic benefits of early childhood education in the City of Philadelphia.

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. And this is Resolution No. 130957 for your information.

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As many of you know, there's been, and as all of you obviously know,

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2 there's been much talk about education,
3 the future of it. We had organizations,
4 we met with many organizations, who came
5 in to talk about what they think we
6 should do, where we are. We will be
7 having other hearings, not only on early
8 education but on education overall.

9 With regard to early education,
10 as we know, and even President Obama is
11 talking about it, when children start
12 school early, they become successful
13 adults, just to put it mildly.

14 So having said that, we again
15 are very, very happy to hear you.

16 Will the Clerk read the title
17 of the first person to testify.

18 THE CLERK: Dr. Lori Shorr,
19 Chief Education Officer, Mayor's Office
20 of Education, City of Philadelphia; and
21 Professor Dominic Gullo, Associate Dean
22 for Research, Professor, Early Childhood
23 Education, School of Education, Drexel
24 University; and Ms. Donna Bibbs, Director
25 of Early Head Start from the Children's

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2 Hospital of Philadelphia.

3 (Witnesses approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much.

7 The Chair notes that we're
8 happy to have my colleague in Council who
9 is here. Thank you very much. And we
10 will begin.

11 DR. SHORR: Good morning.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you again. We thank Councilman Oh for
14 coming, and we're happy to have you,
15 Dr. Lori Shorr and company. Please
16 begin.

17 DR. SHORR: I'd like to thank
18 the members of the Committee on Education
19 for inviting me to testify today
20 regarding Resolution 130957. My name is
21 Lori Shorr. I'm the Chief Education
22 Officer for Mayor Michael A. Nutter.

23 While it has always made common
24 sense to invest in the early years of
25 education, there's now a growing body of

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2 research that indicates the benefits of
3 high-quality early childhood education.

4 Pennsylvania Partnership for
5 Children put a brief out last week which
6 highlights research on the benefits of
7 early childhood education in
8 Pennsylvania, including significantly
9 improving early literacy, language, and
10 math skills as children enter
11 kindergarten; increasing the likelihood
12 of high school graduation and college
13 attainment; every dollar spent on pre-K
14 returns up to 17 in later savings and
15 benefits; Pennsylvania school districts
16 investing in pre-K could gain back as
17 much as 78 percent of their pre-K
18 investments in other education savings.

19 But despite this research, only
20 18 percent of the Commonwealth's three-
21 to four-year-olds were able to benefit
22 from high-quality publicly funded pre-K.

23 Philadelphia statistics show
24 that over 70,000 children under six live
25 below 200 percent of the federal poverty

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2 level. Of these, only 23,855 receive a
3 childcare subsidy. Philadelphia families
4 wait an average of seven months before
5 receiving a subsidy.

6 And the sad fact is that
7 subsidized care doesn't always equate to
8 quality care. In Philadelphia, about
9 7,000 children who receive childcare
10 subsidy are enrolled in informal
11 childcare, which means it's not licensed
12 and doesn't necessarily meet basic health
13 and safety standards. While some of
14 these settings are perfectly good, others
15 contain risks for lead exposure and other
16 environmental problems, fire safety,
17 food-borne illness, et cetera.

18 Licensed care is a crucial
19 first step, but it alone does not
20 guarantee quality either. Pennsylvania
21 has a nationally recognized childcare
22 quality rating and improvement system
23 called Keystone STARS and half of
24 Philadelphia's licensed providers
25 participate in this.

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2 Unfortunately, Philadelphia has
3 an acute shortage of high-quality
4 childcare providers. Only 7 percent of
5 licensed facilities provide good quality
6 care as measured by Keystone STARS
7 evaluation system.

8 In addition to high-quality
9 care through the subsidized childcare
10 system, the School District of
11 Philadelphia provides high-quality pre-K
12 to 8,500 low-income three- and
13 four-year-olds, about 20 percent of those
14 who are eligible. Since 2003, the
15 District has partnered with high-quality
16 Keystone STARS providers to expand these
17 opportunities considered a best practice
18 nationwide.

19 Our Administration understands
20 the importance of high-quality early
21 childhood education and its link to
22 educational and career success. During
23 his first term, the Mayor established the
24 Mayor's Early Learning Advisory Committee
25 comprised of childcare providers, City

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2 and School District officials, and policy
3 and budget advocates to enhance the
4 quality, affordability, and quantity of
5 childcare services in Philadelphia.

6 Examples of the efforts by this committee
7 include the receipt of about a half a
8 million dollar grant from the
9 Philadelphia Workforce Development
10 Corporation, which was used to provide
11 educational credentials to 135 childcare
12 workers; coordination of public and
13 private-sector support that enabled the
14 School District to carry out its
15 restructuring plan last year; the sharing
16 of concerns and best practices across a
17 number of sectors that support early
18 learning opportunities for the City's
19 youngest residents.

20 In the summer of 2013, the
21 Mayor's Office of Community Empowerment
22 and Opportunity launched its Shared
23 Prosperity Plan.

24 Early childhood learning is one
25 of the five key goals of the Shared

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2 Prosperity Philadelphia, the City's plan
3 to fight poverty. As part of that
4 effort, the City will be working with its
5 partners to develop a citywide plan and
6 framework to increase access to
7 high-quality early childhood education.

8 In addition, CEO plans to launch a public
9 information campaign to encourage parents
10 and other caretakers on the importance of
11 early childhood education and supports,
12 including how to identify a high-quality
13 early childhood program and get access to
14 information on available spaces for their
15 children and inform advocacy efforts to
16 increase state and federal funding for
17 early childhood learning opportunities.

18 The goal is that these efforts
19 will, first, double the number of
20 Keystone STAR 3 and 4 programs in the
21 City; increase the number of children
22 entering kindergarten with established
23 pre-literacy skills by at least 25
24 percent; and increase the number of
25 pregnant women and parents of young

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2 children receiving early childhood
3 resources.

4 Parallel to the City's efforts,
5 there are also many Philadelphia-based
6 organizations involved in the Pre-K for
7 PA Campaign. The vision for the campaign
8 is that every three- and four-year-old in
9 the Commonwealth has access to
10 high-quality pre-K. The Pre-K for PA
11 Campaign has also referred to a few
12 states such as Maryland, Oklahoma, and
13 Illinois as states that have successfully
14 implemented pre-K investments resulting
15 in strong outcomes.

16 Although I'm encouraged by the
17 efforts underway in the City, there's
18 still a long way to go before the three-
19 and four-year-olds of Philadelphia all
20 have access to high-quality early
21 childhood educational options.

22 Thank you again to City Council
23 for bringing attention to this important
24 issue, and my office looks forward to
25 learning from the panelists today about

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2 additional options that can be considered
3 by Philadelphia.

4 I'd be happy to answer any
5 questions the Committee has at this time.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you very much. I know some providers of
8 preschool up to second grade who really
9 talk about this Keystone STARS program
10 all the time.

11 DR. SHORR: Yeah.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
13 this gives them additional funding as
14 well, I understand. And I note that you
15 say 20 percent of those who are eligible
16 are able to get it through the School
17 District of Philadelphia, which is sad at
18 this point that we have so many
19 youngsters, because they're born so
20 bright. You know, God made most people
21 at least average, a few a little brighter
22 and a few a little duller or handicapped
23 in some way, but it is a shame what
24 happens to them by the time they get to
25 third grade level.

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2 But this is very important
3 information. We thank you for your
4 testimony.

5 Councilman Oh.

6 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes. Thank you
7 very much, Chairwoman.

8 Just questions for my
9 curiosity. What is the metric right now
10 for the subsidized childcare system and
11 what is the difference between that and
12 low-income families? Is there a
13 difference between subsidized and low
14 income?

15 DR. SHORR: You know, I don't
16 know the answer to that question. I
17 don't know if subsequent panelists will,
18 but if you don't get the answer, we can
19 find it out for you.

20 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. Thank
21 you very much.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you. Thank you very much.

25 Next.

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2 PROFESSOR GULLO: First of all,
3 I'd like to thank Councilwoman Blackwell
4 and the Education Committee of the City
5 Council of Philadelphia for inviting me
6 to testify in this very important issue.
7 My name is Dom Gullo, and I'm a Professor
8 of Early Childhood Education at Drexel
9 University. I've been a public school
10 teacher, and I am very much an advocate
11 of public schools, having been a product
12 of Milwaukee public schools, of which I'm
13 very proud, and was a Milwaukee public
14 school teacher as well. And while I was
15 at the University of Wisconsin in
16 Milwaukee, created an early childhood
17 center for the public schools, which was
18 based on a lot of the principles that I'm
19 going to talk about today.

20 One of the things that I felt
21 that I could contribute to this
22 testimony, in that I'm not an expert in
23 Philadelphia, and I know that there's
24 lots of experts in Philadelphia around
25 me, I am an expert in early childhood

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2 education and child development, and I
3 know what the research says and I know
4 how to impact early childhood education
5 and interpret the research into practice.

6 So what I want to do today is
7 really lay that framework, because what I
8 do is, I believe that it's very important
9 if the City of Philadelphia is going to
10 argue for and commit for early childhood
11 education, they have to know the reasons
12 why and the -- so to have evidence-based
13 information on early childhood education
14 is very important.

15 First of all, what I want to do
16 is really talk about why all of -- not
17 all of the sudden. Why is investing in
18 early childhood education so important.
19 In the book Children of 2020: Creating a
20 Better Tomorrow, the authors provided
21 convincing argument that high-quality
22 early education and care are increasingly
23 important to the fulfillment of the
24 American dream. And there are three
25 reasons why this is so, according to the

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2 book.

3 The first reason is that early
4 education and care systems are the first
5 educators of children outside the home
6 and the first social system to identify
7 children's strengths and potential, and
8 this is very important.

9 The second reason they say that
10 it's important to look at early education
11 and care is that early education and care
12 programs are often the first experience
13 that children have interacting with
14 individuals from cultures, religions,
15 languages, and family structures that are
16 different from their own, and how these
17 experiences are dealt with will have a
18 great impact on our nation as it rapidly
19 becomes more and more diverse.

20 And, finally, it's important to
21 look at early education and care because
22 early education and care that is of high
23 quality lays the foundation for
24 children's developing ideas of freedom
25 and democracy through daily routines and

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2 through the educational process itself.

3 So those three reasons are
4 what's laid out as why it's important to
5 look at early education and care.

6 What I'm going to do is
7 emphasize throughout the characteristic
8 high-quality early education and care.
9 It's not just enough to have programs for
10 children between the ages of birth and
11 five, and that's going to work miracles,
12 but those programs have to be of high
13 quality.

14 So what I want to do is talk
15 about the research, first of all, that
16 looks at the social, economic, and
17 academic benefits of high-quality early
18 education and care, and then allude to
19 what high-quality early education and
20 care looks like as both illustrative but
21 also as suggestions for what Philadelphia
22 should strive toward in developing early
23 education and care programs for the
24 children of Philadelphia.

25 First of all, in my testimony I

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2 kind of highlighted and outlined what the
3 benefits of high-quality early education
4 and care were, and I highlighted three
5 different types of benefits: academic,
6 social, and economic benefits. And one
7 of the things that I want to point out is
8 that those three benefits that are
9 realized because of high-quality early
10 education and care are interrelated, and
11 so they're not an isolated thing.

12 So in terms of academics, what
13 the research has shown over and over
14 again; in fact, it almost has become "it
15 goes without saying" type research now,
16 that high-quality early education and
17 care will increase academic performance
18 among children who attend these programs
19 as compared to children who do not attend
20 these programs. And that's particularly
21 in the area of language, literacy, and
22 mathematics, as well as social competence
23 and emotional development.

24 Now, social competence and
25 emotional development are also very

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2 important parts of academics, because
3 children who are highly socially
4 competent and have healthy emotional
5 development are more attentive to what
6 goes on at school and, therefore, benefit
7 more from what is going on at school. So
8 academically children benefit.

9 The social benefits are many,
10 according to the research. And I kind of
11 combined the social and economic benefits
12 because they basically go hand in hand.

13 Children who attend
14 high-quality early childhood programs as
15 compared to children who do not attend
16 those programs are less likely to
17 experience grade retention, are less
18 likely to need special education services
19 or remedial work, are less likely to drop
20 out of school, experience higher levels
21 of school attainment, experience improved
22 nutrition and health, are less likely to
23 experience child abuse and neglect, and
24 are less likely to become teenage
25 parents. So those are some of the

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2 academic and social benefits that
3 children realize during the school years
4 as a result of attending high-quality
5 early education.

6 The social and economic
7 benefits extend beyond the school years,
8 and as adults, those children who
9 attended early childhood programs that
10 were of high quality will more likely
11 have higher employment and earnings, will
12 pay more taxes, will depend less on
13 welfare and other forms of assistance,
14 will experience lower rates of substance
15 abuse, will engage in fewer criminal acts
16 as juveniles and as adults, and will have
17 lower rates of incarceration.

18 So as you can see, not only are
19 those social benefits, but the economic
20 benefits to schools, community, the
21 nation, and society at large are also
22 realized.

23 So we know from the research --
24 and the research is ongoing and
25 longitudinal -- that there are many

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2 social and economic benefits as well as
3 academic benefits.

4 Another point that I wanted to
5 make is that who benefits from
6 high-quality early education and care is
7 different depending on their background
8 characteristics. Children benefit, but
9 not all children benefit equally.
10 Children who come from lower
11 socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly
12 children who come from high-poverty
13 areas, will benefit more from
14 high-quality early education than
15 children who come from middle class or
16 lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Not
17 that those other children won't benefit,
18 but the children who come from poverty
19 benefit -- extreme poverty benefit even
20 more.

21 Children who come from
22 bilingual homes whose parents are of
23 immigrant descent also benefit more than
24 children who are native English speakers
25 and whose parents are not immigrants.

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2 Families benefit in many
3 different ways. For example, mothers who
4 have children who attend high-quality
5 early education are more likely to
6 complete more years of schooling, will
7 have higher rates of graduation from high
8 school, and are more likely to be
9 employed and have higher rates of earning
10 than mothers whose children did not
11 attend high-quality early childhood
12 programs.

13 Communities and society also
14 benefit from high-quality early education
15 and care for the reasons that I outlined
16 in those economic and social benefits.

17 And so we know that the social
18 and economic benefits are great, and I
19 outlined them and explained much more in
20 the actual testimony itself, but one of
21 the important things that I want to
22 emphasize in my conclusion is that before
23 these things could be realized, we have
24 to ensure that the early childhood
25 programs that children attend are of high

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2 quality. And so what does high quality
3 mean?

4 There are a number of
5 characteristics which I describe at
6 length in my testimony, which I'll only
7 highlight some of the more important --
8 what I consider the more important issues
9 here in terms of what high quality means.

10 There are two different types
11 of quality that you can look at when you
12 talk about early childhood. One is a
13 process quality. That's what goes on in
14 the program. And then there's a
15 structural quality, and that's what the
16 program looks like.

17 And so the process quality,
18 there are a number of different variables
19 that you need to pay attention to. The
20 learning environment must be one that is
21 appropriate for children at that age and
22 who have the characteristics that
23 children have at that age. The
24 curriculum must be interesting, relevant
25 to the life experiences of children and

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2 teach things that are important for them
3 to learn at that age.

4 Assessment should be used to
5 inform teaching and curriculum.

6 Assessment should be accomplished during
7 the process of learning. It shouldn't be
8 something that is done to children in
9 order to exclude them from something or
10 to put them into ability groupings, but
11 rather should inform teachers on what
12 children are best at and how to take
13 advantage of what children know in order
14 to keep that learning process moving.

15 Involving families is also a
16 very important part of a high-quality
17 early childhood program. Early childhood
18 education is also a comprehensive
19 approach. It is multidisciplinary, and
20 it's not just about teaching and
21 learning, but it's also about health,
22 social services, and everything else that
23 goes on.

24 Another very important part is
25 that early childhood education, even if

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2 it's high-quality early childhood pre-K,
3 if you don't have high-quality
4 kindergarten, first, second, and third
5 grade, no matter how high-quality pre-K
6 is, it's not going -- the benefits are
7 not going to last. So what you need is
8 transitions that have seamless
9 continuity, from birth through age eight,
10 so that we have continuous programs that
11 have the same types of understanding and
12 philosophy of educating children at that
13 level. And then ongoing professional
14 development is also a very important part
15 of early childhood education.

16 The structural qualities
17 include things like group size and
18 adult-child ratios, staff qualifications,
19 leadership and administration, and space.
20 And just suffice it to say, that for
21 children at this age, group size and
22 adult -- group size should be smaller and
23 lower adult-child ratios. I've given
24 what the research says is of the most
25 benefit.

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2 Staff qualifications should be
3 very high so that people who are working
4 with these children should have a
5 complete understanding of early childhood
6 education, child development, pedagogy
7 and so forth. Leadership should be such
8 that administrators of these programs
9 should have a good understanding of early
10 childhood principles and theory so they
11 can advocate for these programs. And the
12 space should be adequate so that the
13 kinds of learning that I describe in the
14 testimony can take place.

15 So during my testimony, I
16 emphasize that early childhood programs
17 are beneficial socially, academically, as
18 well as economically.

19 We know what high-quality early
20 childhood education looks like and we
21 know how to attain it, and we all -- all
22 we have to do is understand and admit to
23 ourselves that it's worth the effort and
24 worth the investment in order for these
25 things to take place.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you.

5 PROFESSOR GULLO: I'll take any
6 questions.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you, Doctor. Yes. Do you believe it's a
9 matter of dollars or a matter --
10 everything, even the way we spend
11 dollars, of course is a matter of
12 commitment as well, but it seems that if
13 the authorities like you and Children's
14 Hospital -- they always give excellent
15 testimony as well -- and Dr. Shorr and
16 certainly Ms. Bibbs, how do you describe
17 what our issues are that prevent us from
18 going forward in a large way like we
19 should?

20 PROFESSOR GULLO: Well, there's
21 a number of things that I believe. I
22 think dollars are important, obviously,
23 but dollars aren't the fix. I mean, you
24 can pump a lot of money into early
25 childhood education, and if you're not

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2 doing the right things, it's not going to
3 be effective. So I've seen really good
4 early childhood education that doesn't
5 cost as much as other programs that are
6 not as high a quality.

7 So dollars are important. I
8 mean, I can't say that it's not, but
9 investment is more important, and
10 investment means commitment to making
11 sure that what we know from the research,
12 what we know from theory and the
13 conceptual framework for what early
14 childhood should look like is adhered to
15 and being as dedicated to that structure
16 as we can in interpretation of that
17 structure. And so that's one piece of
18 it.

19 I think another part of it is,
20 the whole issue of continuity and
21 seamlessness is critical, because I've
22 been in early childhood education for
23 over 35 years now and it's always -- I
24 mean, I've seen the whole line of blame.
25 The primary teachers blame the

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2 kindergarten teachers. They didn't learn
3 what they were supposed to learn in
4 kindergarten to get to primary.
5 Kindergarten blames, used to be, parents,
6 but now they blame the preschool
7 teachers. Preschool blames the parents,
8 and so on and so forth.

9 What we need is a seamless
10 effort in developing high-quality early
11 childhood education programs that involve
12 families so that they're not the
13 outsiders in the game.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Do you
15 think that the professionals in the
16 business know what to do? When you say
17 you can look at a successful program and
18 you can look at one that doesn't work, is
19 it that the providers don't know or is it
20 that they choose other methods and ways
21 to deal with the children?

22 PROFESSOR GULLO: I think it's
23 a mixed bag. I think that most highly
24 trained early childhood educators know
25 what is best practice. Best practice

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2 isn't always adhered to for a number of
3 different reasons. Sometimes best
4 practice isn't adhered to because that's
5 not what the consumer wants.

6 So, for example, in my
7 estimation -- and disregard the fact that
8 we're talking about children who come
9 from inner city or lower socioeconomic
10 backgrounds or anything else like that.
11 Some families want -- I don't believe
12 that children who are three and four
13 years old should have formal -- and I
14 mean formal -- lessons on how to learn
15 how to read so that they will read books
16 by the time they leave preschool. Most
17 preschoolers are not ready to learn how
18 to read. I'm not saying don't expose
19 them to language and literacy and letters
20 and those things. And those kids who are
21 ready to read at three will read, but we
22 shouldn't expect that all children have
23 the same level.

24 So a lot of times, for example,
25 when you go to some early childhood

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2 programs, they guarantee by the time your
3 child leaves this program, they know all
4 the letters of the alphabet, they know
5 all of this, they know all of that, and
6 so on, which puts a lot of kids under
7 pressure who aren't ready to do those
8 things even when they're five.

9 So while a lot of people do
10 know what it is, they don't always adhere
11 to it.

12 Another problem is, the field
13 of early childhood education is
14 fractured. I was a national governing
15 board member on the National Association
16 for the Education of Young Children and,
17 as such, I got a really good national
18 understanding of what people thought
19 about early childhood education. Almost
20 nobody has the same definition for what
21 early childhood education is. The
22 profession, NAEYC, says early childhood
23 education is any educational program that
24 serves children between the ages of birth
25 and age eight, which means that includes

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2 infant/toddler, that includes pre-K/three
3 and four-year-olds, it includes
4 kindergarten, and it includes first
5 through third grade. Yet I travel around
6 the country talking to people about early
7 childhood, and everybody -- if I say the
8 word "early childhood," people interpret
9 it in their own way, and oftentimes what
10 I say doesn't make sense, because they're
11 not interpreting it the same way I'm
12 interpreting it. So when I say "early
13 childhood," I'm talking about birth
14 through age eight. When some people talk
15 about early childhood, they're talking
16 about before kindergarten and so on.

17 So the field of early childhood
18 education is fractured. Even NAEYC, the
19 national organization, is fractured,
20 because while they talk about early
21 childhood being birth to age eight, most
22 of their efforts are on birth to age five
23 and very little about public schools and
24 school-age children is being done. It's
25 better than it used to be, but still has

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2 a long way to go.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you. Thank you. Very important.

5 Councilman Oh.

6 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
7 much.

8 Dean Gullo or Dr. Gullo?

9 PROFESSOR GULLO: Dom.

10 COUNCILMAN OH: I'll say Dean
11 Gullo. Sounds good to me.

12 First of all, thank you for
13 being here. I appreciate your spending
14 your time. You obviously bring a
15 tremendous amount of research and study
16 and knowledge and experience. So I have
17 to take advantage of the opportunity to
18 ask you some questions, because I'm
19 curious.

20 When you talk about
21 high-quality early education programs,
22 you've kind of divided it in two areas,
23 process and structure, and you've talked
24 about best practice. Could you identify
25 in your opinion what are the best

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2 performing high-quality early education
3 programs that are out there that we could
4 look at as a model?

5 PROFESSOR GULLO: You mean like
6 an actual model that --

7 COUNCILMAN OH: A city, a
8 state, a town, in or outside of America
9 that is a system.

10 PROFESSOR GULLO: I hesitate to
11 do that, only because I've seen what I
12 would consider a good curriculum being
13 done badly and a place where there is,
14 quote, no curriculum being done well.

15 I think what is better to think
16 about in terms of -- better to think
17 about is what the National Association
18 for the Education of Young Children talks
19 about in terms of developmentally
20 appropriate practice. So that if you
21 take a look at programs that adhere to
22 the principles of developmentally
23 appropriate practice, you're likely to
24 see good practice in a lot of different
25 places in different ways.

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2 I can't really say, Go observe
3 this classroom, because, first of all, I
4 don't know enough about them in this area
5 to be able to tell you to do that, and
6 not a lot of schools are adhering to a
7 particular curriculum, like Montessori or
8 something like that. A lot of people
9 think Montessori is a very highly
10 developmentally appropriate curriculum.
11 A lot of people talk about -- I don't
12 know if you've heard of Reggio Emilia,
13 which is an early childhood curriculum
14 out of Italy that integrates the arts
15 into the curriculum, and a lot of school
16 districts are trying to implement the
17 Reggio approach in their cities, but
18 don't understand that Reggio Emilia is
19 also cultural, so that you can't take
20 pizza from Italy and bring it over here
21 and expect the pizza to taste the same.
22 And it's kind of the same thing.

23 So the Reggio programs, while
24 they are very child centered, are not
25 always implemented in exactly the same

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2 way or have the same benefits or the same
3 outcomes.

4 So I'm not skirting the issue,
5 but I kind of am, only because I don't
6 think there is such a thing as -- and I
7 would never want to point you to say, Go
8 look at this model because that's going
9 to be the one you want to emulate,
10 because what model works over here might
11 not work in Philadelphia.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you. The
13 reason I ask that question also is
14 because I wanted to get your opinion on
15 how we run our school systems here in the
16 United States and particularly in
17 Pennsylvania, and, that is, you've
18 identified that there are very capable
19 professionals who are highly trained and
20 they are teaching early education, and
21 there are very highly qualified
22 administrators, but they are governed
23 under either elected or appointed persons
24 who make the decisions ultimately, who I
25 think in most cases have less knowledge

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2 and expertise than the people that
3 they're governing. It's an interesting
4 system to me as I look at other systems
5 where they have a Ministry of Education
6 and there's highly acclaimed and
7 top-notch academic people running the
8 systems.

9 What's your opinion on that?

10 PROFESSOR GULLO: Well, you're
11 talking about other countries with
12 Ministries of Education?

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Yeah. I'm
14 talking about the fact that we have very
15 successful systems where you have
16 consistency, continuity, 10 years, 15
17 years of strategy administered and run by
18 highly accomplished and acclaimed
19 academians in education, and in the
20 United States, for example, we have so
21 many different disjointed educational
22 systems from towns to counties to cities,
23 and many of them you elect people and
24 they have no educational background or
25 you appoint people that have no

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2 experience in teaching or training.

3 PROFESSOR GULLO: I have two
4 experiences in that exact thing. This
5 summer I was a visiting professor in
6 Beijing. So I saw there, where I was
7 invited by the Ministry of Education, the
8 early childhood branch of the Ministry of
9 Education, and the Chinese Society for
10 Education of Young Children to come and
11 lecture to their faculty there. And so
12 we saw a lot of preschools. Now, there
13 they have a Ministry of Education where
14 there is a lot of consistency that goes
15 on within a province. It's not always
16 province to province, as they pointed out
17 to me. And so what I saw in Beijing was
18 phenomenal.

19 Now, could that work in this
20 country?

21 Oh, and the second one that I
22 had experience was I had a similar
23 experience in Seoul, Korea.

24 Now, could that work in this
25 country? I'm not sure that it could, and

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2 the reason is because there is much more
3 homogeneity in those other countries than
4 there is in this country, even though
5 within the homogeneity that I observed
6 there are differences, but the
7 differences are different kinds of
8 differences than our differences are
9 here, if that makes any sense. So that
10 the philosophy of what goes on at home is
11 the same as the philosophy of what goes
12 on in school. That's not true here. So
13 that because of just the way our culture
14 is, we do have that kind of individualism
15 that is pervasive in most of our
16 practices, including education.

17 So I agree that in order for
18 something like that to work, there has to
19 be kind of this -- not homogeneity in the
20 sense of everybody is the same, but there
21 has to at least be a lessening of
22 disagreements between what is
23 philosophically appropriate for children,
24 for teachers, parents, and so on and so
25 forth, because that's one thing.

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2 The other thing that's very
3 different in those countries is, teachers
4 have a much different respect level than
5 they have in this country. So that the
6 authority that the teacher has is much
7 more authoritative than it is in this
8 country. And that's just been my
9 observation. I've never done the
10 research on that, but I've just seen the
11 kind of respect that teachers get in
12 other countries as compared to what I see
13 here.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: I would point
15 out that your paper does indicate
16 high-quality training and higher
17 compensation. Both are true in those
18 countries.

19 PROFESSOR GULLO: Right.

20 COUNCILMAN OH: So that will
21 lead me to my last set of questions. So
22 I'm kind of curious as I asked,
23 Dr. Shorr, because you identify that 42
24 percent of four-year-olds in the United
25 States attend publicly funded pre-K

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2 programs, 28 percent in public school,
3 which means 14 percent are in non-public
4 schools. So 42 percent of four-year-olds
5 who go to publicly funded pre-K, they
6 would be in an economic bracket. Is that
7 true or untrue?

8 PROFESSOR GULLO: Untrue. For
9 example, there are some states that have
10 universal pre-kindergarten. Where I came
11 from in Wisconsin originally quite a
12 while ago, but when I was in Milwaukee
13 public schools, Milwaukee public schools
14 had universal pre-K. So if you were
15 three or four, you could enter the public
16 school system. And it depended. Every
17 school had a four-year-old pre-K program.
18 Not every school had a three-year-old
19 pre-K program. The three-year-old pre-K
20 programs were specialized. For example,
21 there were four foreign language
22 immersion schools - French, German,
23 Spanish, and American Sign. You could
24 start those schools when you were three.
25 Montessori you could start when you were

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2 three. The early childhood program that
3 I started there, you started when you
4 were three. Everybody else started when
5 you were four.

6 So there are some school
7 districts that have universal pre-K
8 starting at three years old. Oklahoma is
9 another state that has universal pre-K,
10 among others.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Unfortunately
12 we're not such a state.

13 PROFESSOR GULLO: Right.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: And I think
15 unfortunately because -- I'm going to
16 make a statement, which is really a
17 question. From at least the places
18 you've been; for example, Seoul, every
19 child gets an opportunity for early
20 childhood education, every child. And in
21 Philadelphia, that is not the case. And
22 even though we really struggle with the
23 finances here, but at the end of the day,
24 we are trying to provide early education
25 to low-income children, and that means

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2 only a portion are even eligible, but
3 when they go to early education, they
4 don't have middle class kids or rich kids
5 learning with them. And I think your
6 research, at least I will believe,
7 indicates that when you put all the kids
8 together, they learn better.

9 PROFESSOR GULLO: Right.

10 COUNCILMAN OH: So what I'm
11 curious about in that is that low income,
12 I think -- I'm going to guess -- was
13 defined years or decades ago. I know
14 Dr. Shorr is going to say something. Let
15 me finish this point. I really want to
16 hear what you have to say.

17 DR. SHORR: I just have the
18 question you asked me before. They sent
19 me a note on it.

20 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
21 much. Would you let me know.

22 DR. SHORR: In order to get the
23 state subsidy for childcare, you have to
24 be at 200 percent of the poverty level to
25 receive it, and you can go up to 235

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2 percent of the poverty level and stay on
3 it. So just a little bit of fact that
4 you had asked for.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you. I'm
6 trying to think what is the poverty level
7 right now.

8 DR. SHORR: Forty-six thousand
9 for a family of four.

10 COUNCILMAN OH: For a family of
11 four, 46,000.

12 DR. SHORR: About.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: About 46
14 thousand? Okay. The reason I ask that
15 is because I'm just curious that our
16 measurements have kept pace with reality,
17 that today what we define as middle class
18 is not middle class. It's really poor.
19 A lot of people are defined as middle
20 class. They can't make ends meet.
21 They're not sending their kids to school.
22 They don't have an opportunity to.
23 They're not at home. They're really
24 struggling. And, you know, when we
25 define like what's going on in

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2 Philadelphia and the measurements, I
3 mean, we're the poorest big city in
4 America, sadly, but I think we're poorer
5 than that.

6 And so I'm just very
7 interested, Dean, in what your research
8 shows when you look at the reality of
9 what is poverty and when you get rid of
10 the metrics or the definition, when it
11 actually affects families, that we don't
12 move to some more universal pre-K
13 education system here.

14 PROFESSOR GULLO: Is that for
15 me?

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes, please.

17 PROFESSOR GULLO: Oh, okay.
18 Yeah. I agree with you that we are
19 getting more fine-grained in terms of how
20 we're defining socioeconomic status. In
21 fact, at the national level, the Early
22 Childhood Longitudinal Study that they
23 did in the Department of Education now
24 puts social class into five quintiles.
25 So that rather -- it used to be three

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2 social classes - lower, middle, upper.

3 Now there's five, which is poverty,

4 lower, middle, upper middle and so on.

5 So it does do that.

6 I think that -- what was the

7 actual question?

8 COUNCILMAN OH: The actual

9 question is that if you take away what is

10 currently defined as low income, middle

11 class and you just looked at how people

12 actually live, some people would be

13 defined as middle class, but they're

14 broke before the next paycheck and

15 they're in debt and they can't make ends

16 meet, and yet there's no real effort to

17 provide their children with the

18 opportunity for early education programs.

19 PROFESSOR GULLO: Okay. So we

20 do know that -- my area of research that

21 I focus on in early childhood education

22 is risk and resiliency among children who

23 are from homes of economic poverty in

24 urban areas. So that's basically my

25 area. So right now I'm conducting a

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2 study in which I am looking at what are
3 those characteristics of family,
4 community, and school that will delineate
5 or change the paths of children who are
6 going through the educational ranks,
7 because one of the things that I find is
8 happening is that we are kind of lumping
9 kids together homogeneously just because
10 they've come from the same social class,
11 but children who come from, for example,
12 lower socioeconomic backgrounds, my
13 preliminary study that I did on this
14 found that not all children who come from
15 lower socioeconomic backgrounds have the
16 same style of parenting going on in their
17 houses. So, therefore, they're going to
18 be different academically because of the
19 things that we know create academic
20 difference in children. So you can't
21 just lump all these kids together.

22 So I'll have a better answer
23 for you probably by summer when I finish
24 analyzing all the data, but I agree that
25 what we have to do is really take more of

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2 an ecological approach to understanding
3 risk and resiliency in terms of academic
4 performance, readiness, and so on, and
5 not only look at just the child but also
6 look at the family characteristics, the
7 community characteristics, the school
8 characteristics and so on, because a lot
9 of times children don't even go to school
10 in their communities, and that makes a
11 difference as well.

12 So I agree with you that we
13 need to look at those factors to really
14 get a good model for what is it that is
15 making the difference in children's
16 performance besides income level.

17 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you
18 very much, Dean. I just can't help
19 resist commenting that with so much
20 expertise right here in our city, that I
21 just think it's a shame that our School
22 District doesn't have the opportunity to
23 have that type of influence defining some
24 of the programmatic attempts and goals
25 that we can pursue. It's so paradoxical

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2 to have such great expertise,
3 universities right here.

4 Anyway, thank you so very much.

5 PROFESSOR GULLO: Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you very much.

8 Director Bibbs, Children's
9 Hospital of Philadelphia.

10 MS. BIBBS: Good morning and
11 thank you for inviting me to talk about
12 Early Head Start at the Children's
13 Hospital of Philadelphia.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you.

16 MS. BIBBS: My name is Donna
17 Bibbs and the I'm Director for Early Head
18 Start at Children's Hospital. I've been
19 a Director for eight years. I have 20
20 years experience working in the field,
21 specifically in West Philadelphia with
22 low-income families.

23 Just a little background.

24 Early Head Start started in 1994, and it
25 provides comprehensive child development

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2 services and parent support to low-income
3 families. Early Head Start came to CHOP
4 in 1999, and we're funded to serve 136
5 children; 124 are home based and 12 are
6 provided services in our center. And I
7 just wanted to point out also in the
8 testimony I submitted there was an error.
9 We service typically in a year 200
10 children. So it should be 2,700.

11 We are located at the Karabots
12 Pediatric Care Center in West
13 Philadelphia on 48th and Market. We've
14 been there about a year. Prior to that,
15 we were in the Kirkbride Center, which is
16 about 100 yards from where we are now.
17 We service specifically 19104 and 19139
18 zip code areas.

19 Early Head Start has specific
20 goals that we like to achieve or we
21 strive to achieve. One is providing
22 developmentally appropriate enriching
23 care providers for infants and toddlers,
24 supporting primary caregivers as the
25 child's first teacher and helping them

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2 meet their personal goals, connecting
3 families to community resources, ensuring
4 quality services through maintaining
5 skilled and caring staff. Some of the
6 ways that we do this is providing the
7 following services:

8 We have home-based services
9 where basically we have home visitors go
10 into the homes of families, providing
11 them with parenting education, child
12 development training, and connecting them
13 with social services, doing some
14 goal-setting strategies as well. So we
15 try to individualize what that particular
16 family needs to be successful and
17 self-sufficient.

18 In addition to that, we work
19 with expectant families, and what we do
20 with them is provide them with prenatal
21 education in the home. We do screenings
22 specifically around depression, drug and
23 substance abuse, and we also do education
24 around infant care so they can prepare
25 for their child when the child arrives.

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2 We have a center-based option,
3 and for that we partner with the
4 Montgomery Early Learning Center, which
5 is located on 39th and Warren. There we
6 have two classrooms, and in most -- and
7 the way we provide services is more than
8 the base that's provided by license. So
9 our teacher-to-child ratio is four to
10 one. So for infants, that's standard,
11 four to one. For the toddlers, it's the
12 same, four to one.

13 We do screenings and
14 assessments. We do developmental
15 screenings, nutrition screenings and
16 assessments. We do safety assessments.
17 We also make sure that all children have
18 medical and dental homes. And as part of
19 our needs assessments, we work with
20 families after we develop a relationship
21 and engage families and have more of a
22 trusting relationship. We talk about
23 what their needs are, what are their
24 goals, what are things that they would
25 like to do and work on so they can be the

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2 best possible parent to their child so
3 their child has every option to succeed
4 when they do go to school.

5 So some of the areas we talk
6 about is child development for parents.
7 Some parents just want to know more about
8 what to expect from their child as they
9 grow and develop. We talk about health
10 and wellness. We set goals around
11 obtaining jobs, going back to school,
12 completing their education. We talk
13 about finding out more about what's
14 available in their community, become
15 stronger in their communities as well.
16 And it really depends, because it's
17 individualized. So if parents want to
18 have more information about other goals
19 that they set, we help them with that as
20 well.

21 We offer training to all the
22 families in the program around parenting.
23 We do nutrition. We use a community
24 assessment to determine what are the
25 trends. And so based on that, we'll

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2 develop workshops and trainings as well.

3 So we do budgeting, time management.

4 Again, we make sure we get feedback from

5 the families so that we stay relevant to

6 what their needs are.

7 We do recruitment. Most of the

8 families come to us through

9 self-referral. Their friends tell them

10 about the program. We have connections,

11 we go out and recruit from health

12 centers, WIC programs, other social

13 services agencies, Child Link, et cetera.

14 Families can stay in our

15 program until they're approximately 36

16 months of age. So at two and a half, we

17 start talking about transitioning, and

18 during that time, we work with families

19 to figure out what their needs are, so

20 when they leave us, there is a sense of

21 continuity to make sure that once our

22 program is gone, they have some things

23 set in place so they can continue their

24 trajectory towards success.

25 Some of the things that

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2 families tend to do is go -- are
3 interested in is continuing on to Head
4 Start or other developmentally
5 appropriate locations. And for our
6 families who choose to stay at home and
7 educate their child in their home, we
8 make sure that they're connected with
9 community agencies, making sure that they
10 are connected to library, other parenting
11 classes, et cetera.

12 We have other opportunities for
13 families to participate in the program
14 around developing their leadership skills
15 and learn more about governance. We have
16 what we call Policy Council, which is
17 similar to a parent-teachers association
18 where parents actually come and have the
19 opportunity to learn about budgeting.
20 They meet with -- they develop
21 subcommittees and talk about what the
22 other parents of the program would like
23 to see happen for their program. They
24 have opportunities to go and participate
25 on a larger statewide council as well.

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2 And we find that this is very rewarding,
3 so that when they leave our program,
4 again, they continue this and become
5 involved in their child's education in
6 the public schools.

7 I thought about in my hearing I
8 provided some data about the program, but
9 I always find it more helpful to share
10 specific success stories that we've had
11 in the program. One I'd like to share --
12 and we did change the names of this, but
13 I wanted to share one about a family
14 we'll call Sheila and her daughter Gia,
15 and I'm going to actually read it to make
16 sure I stay appropriate with it.

17 Sheila and Gia game into the
18 Early Head Start program when Gia was
19 about six months old. Sheila was
20 enthusiastic about discovering ways to
21 enhance her child's development and was
22 eager for the weekly home visits. She
23 always had a special blanket for Gia to
24 have floor time and would sit on the
25 floor and engage with Gia and ask

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2 questions of her home visitor.

3 During the course of the home
4 visits, Sheila's home visitor noticed
5 that she had a difficult time completing
6 Early Head Start documents. After
7 developing a strong home visitor/family
8 relationship, the home visitor asked
9 Sheila if she had difficulty reading.
10 Sheila admitted that she could only read
11 a little, even though she had graduated
12 from high school. The home visitor and
13 Sheila discussed the idea of her
14 attending a literacy class so she could
15 read her stories to her daughter. Sheila
16 loved the idea and started attending
17 weekly literacy classes through the
18 Mayor's Commission of Literacy.

19 She has now been taking
20 literacy classes for about a year and a
21 half. She reads books with Gia at home
22 during the home visits and at the Free
23 Library. Sheila and Gia often walk to
24 the library as a family outing.

25 Also during home visits, Sheila

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2 discussed her struggles in school. She
3 told her home visitor that she had a hard
4 time and that she had an IEP. She was
5 concerned that her daughter had problems
6 learning to speak as she did as a child,
7 so the home visitor suggested she call
8 Child Link and ask to have Gia evaluated.
9 Gia is currently receiving speech and
10 language early intervention biweekly.
11 Gia is now using more words and can tell
12 mom about her toys.

13 Sheila is a strong advocate for
14 her family. She attends early
15 intervention and disability workshops and
16 conferences regularly. She shares her
17 information with friends, family, and her
18 home visitor. Most recently she attended
19 Temple University's Institute on
20 Disabilities conference in Lancaster,
21 Pennsylvania to learn to advocate for
22 herself and her child.

23 Sheila is also getting job
24 training. Her goals are to work and have
25 her child attend day care and eventually

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2 move into her own apartment.

3 Sheila has been a tremendous
4 asset to the Early Head Start program at
5 CHOP. At the Early Head Start she
6 attended musical training classes with
7 Gia, participated in cooking classes and
8 even became a nutrition peer counselor,
9 and she was elected to Policy Council
10 this year. She really encourages other
11 families to fully participate in Early
12 Head Start.

13 This family in particular is
14 really special because I've seen her grow
15 and develop, and she actually during our
16 meetings will stand up and read notes
17 from other parents, and she stumbles
18 sometimes, but she knows this is
19 something that she wants to achieve so
20 she can make sure she provides the best
21 life possible for her daughter, which we
22 really emphasize.

23 I feel Early Head Start
24 provides a lot of support to families in
25 real life. And you guys have talked

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2 about the importance of setting this up
3 as a lifestyle, a cultural change, and
4 some of our families just have not had
5 those things set aside the way we do it,
6 the way we're able to provide it to them.

7 So I thank you for the
8 opportunity to give you a little insight
9 about Early Head Start. It's in more
10 depth again in my testimonial, and thank
11 you for the opportunity to come today.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you. Thank you, Director Bibbs.

14 The Chair notes that Councilman
15 Mark Squilla is here and Vice Chair
16 Blondell Reynolds Brown as well.

17 Questions?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
20 Children's Hospital is always great and
21 always gives good statistics.

22 You were all very good. Let me
23 thank you very much.

24 Clerk, please read the names of
25 the next panel.

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2 Thank you all very, very much.

3 THE CLERK: Ms. Hillary

4 Linardopoulos, Philadelphia Federation of
5 Teachers; Professor Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek,
6 Director of the Infant Language
7 Laboratory, Department of Psychology from
8 Temple University; and Ms. Renee Queen
9 Jackson, Deputy Chief, Office of Early
10 Childhood Education from the School
11 District of Philadelphia.

12 (Witnesses approached witness
13 table.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
15 morning. Thank you for being here.
16 Please identify yourself and begin your
17 testimony.

18 MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Thank you,
19 Councilwoman Blackwell and other members
20 of Council that are present. My name is
21 Hillary Linardopoulos. I am a staff
22 representative at the Philadelphia
23 Federation of Teachers and I am
24 testifying on behalf of Jerry Jordan and
25 the PFT today. Something came up at the

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2 last minute that prevented Jerry from
3 coming, but he thanks you for holding
4 these hearings and appreciates you
5 allowing me to testify on his behalf.

6 So, again, thank you,
7 Councilwoman Blackwell, for holding the
8 meeting and also for inviting us to talk
9 about this very critical issue to our
10 children and our city.

11 There is almost universal
12 agreement nationwide about the importance
13 of pre-K programs. All of the research
14 on the subject indicates that children
15 who are enrolled in quality early
16 childhood programs do much better in
17 school than those who do not have the
18 same opportunity, as we heard from our
19 previous panel.

20 This is particularly true for
21 children in low-income families who
22 typically find themselves academically
23 behind their peers when they start
24 attending elementary school. And as a
25 former kindergarten teacher myself, I can

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2 personally attest to the impact of
3 students having received quality pre-K
4 services. My grade partner and I used to
5 make sure that when we got our list of
6 students, that we equally distributed the
7 ones that had been to the Head Start
8 program at our school, because we knew
9 how much of a difference that would make
10 in their readiness for kindergarten and
11 how significant that would be in our
12 classrooms and how much of a mentor they
13 would be able to be for the students who
14 had not received pre-K programs. So we
15 always used to try to make sure that they
16 were divided so that everybody had -- so
17 that we had a good mix of students with
18 different experiences.

19 And research clearly suggests
20 that ensuring that a child is reading on
21 grade level by third grade is an
22 essential component of a successful
23 long-lasting academic career. Even
24 Governor Corbett, with his shameful
25 record on education funding, acknowledges

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2 the need for increased early childhood
3 education in his latest state budget
4 proposals.

5 In Philadelphia this is
6 something that we have known for years,
7 and until very recently, we have had a
8 renowned Head Start program for the
9 City's children. Having District
10 teachers, qualified experts in early
11 childhood education preparing our three-
12 and four-year-olds for the now very
13 rigorous kindergarten experience was an
14 invaluable means of ensuring a seamless
15 and successful start to a child's school
16 experience.

17 But as with many programs and
18 services for children, the budget crisis
19 forced the School District to outsource
20 hundreds of early childhood education
21 positions. This, of course, meant the
22 loss of many certified highly qualified
23 instructors.

24 This shift affected the many
25 children who once attended Head Start

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2 programs aligned with the School
3 District's curriculum and that were
4 located within elementary schools, and
5 that was part of that seamless transition
6 from pre-K to K, one and two.

7 Early childhood programs are on
8 a long list of examples of how our most
9 vulnerable children have suffered under
10 the fiscal management of the School
11 Reform Commission.

12 We certainly have had no
13 shortage of opportunities to discuss how
14 the School District's budget issues have
15 impacted learning in grades K to 12. We
16 can add early childhood as another area
17 where the current education funding model
18 has failed.

19 The PFT does not see early
20 childhood education as a lofty wish list
21 item. We see it as an essential
22 component of our school communities, and
23 as such, we included access to quality
24 pre-K programs for all three- and
25 four-year-olds as a component of our

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2 contract proposals to the District over a
3 year ago.

4 Early childhood education is
5 another area that would be improved if
6 Pennsylvania had a sustainable funding
7 formula for education. As we have done
8 before this body many times over the past
9 year, the PFT is calling for a radical
10 shift in philosophy when it comes to
11 education funding. If we continue down
12 the current path, we will not only
13 jeopardize the long-term futures of our
14 young people, but also compromise their
15 potential before they even reach
16 kindergarten.

17 Thank you for allowing me to
18 speak with you today. I'm happy to
19 answer any questions you may have.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you. Yeah, we certainly obviously agree
22 that early childhood education should be
23 prioritized.

24 Questions, comments?

25 (No response.)

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2 MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much. I guess we all agree.

5 MS. LINARDOPOULOS: I'll take
6 that.

7 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK:
8 Councilwoman Blackwell and the entire
9 Philadelphia Council, I just am so
10 excited to be here, and thank you so much
11 on behalf of all of Philadelphia's
12 families and children for raising what I
13 think is an unbelievably important issue
14 for which the data, as I think you just
15 mentioned and many before me have
16 suggested, is just locked tight. So I'm
17 glad we were able to discuss it on behalf
18 of the City.

19 My name is Kathy Hirsh-Pasek.
20 I'm a Professor at Temple University,
21 Professor of child psychology. I've been
22 an internationally recognized scientist
23 for many years on these issues. I guess
24 I'm sort of Dominic Part 2 today, with
25 some 200 published papers and 11 books,

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2 all on the area of early childhood
3 education.

4 My main area is in academic
5 development where I look at language and
6 literacy. I've also looked at how we can
7 make the education that we have for young
8 children work in a developmentally
9 appropriate way. So I've worked a lot on
10 the "how" and what counts as quality.

11 Today what I'd like to do is to
12 suggest five points that are evidence
13 based that I think everyone would agree
14 on, that there is a clear consensus, and
15 then I just want to give you highlights
16 under each of these points.

17 The first mentioned before,
18 large-scale, high-quality -- I should say
19 that once again -- high-quality programs
20 have substantial and lasting effects on
21 early social and academic skills in young
22 children.

23 Point two, the economic impact
24 of strong early childhood programs is
25 substantial.

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2 Point three, early childhood
3 education helps -- and you asked this
4 question earlier, so here it is. It
5 helps both low-income and middle-income
6 children, and that is a discussion that
7 is really rearing its head at the
8 national level and I believe the reason
9 that people have set the cut-off level at
10 200 percent of the poverty level, and we
11 can talk about that more.

12 Four, to be most effective --
13 and this is a new point -- early
14 childhood programs should start even
15 before preschool. They should start in
16 zero to three. And you heard a little
17 bit about that from the woman who just
18 spoke from CHOP and also from Dominic who
19 told you about programs that were
20 starting at age three. That's what's
21 starting to happen internationally and
22 nationally.

23 And five is again a new point,
24 which is that early childhood
25 intervention does not take place merely

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2 in schools. And that's a really
3 important point. Children, when they're
4 going full time to school, are spending
5 but 20 percent of their waking time in a
6 school room or in a classroom. That
7 means there's 80 percent of their time
8 that we really do have to address as a
9 city and as a community.

10 In my testimony I give you two
11 recent reports that just came out that
12 review a lot of the data, and so I'm just
13 going to go to highlights of some of this
14 data and you can look for more numbers in
15 these reports.

16 On point one, large-scale,
17 high-quality programs have substantial
18 and lasting effects on social and
19 academic skills. These studies started
20 back in the 1970s, and many of you have
21 heard about the Abecedarian Project and
22 many of you have heard about the Perry
23 Preschool Project, and what we often hear
24 in the debates, especially as we get into
25 the more conservative end of the debates,

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2 is, Oh, my gosh, these programs were just
3 so expensive and so intensive that we can
4 never possibly do this with the rest of
5 the kids in the country. And I'd like to
6 suggest to you that that just ain't so.

7 It turns out that we have done
8 analysis across all of the programs that
9 are out there. One recent one that was
10 released in 2010 by Camilli and
11 colleagues looked across 123 studies
12 across this nation and found that when
13 you look across all of them, you get
14 short-term and long-term gains when you
15 have high-quality preschool programs.
16 That is the solution for reducing the
17 achievement gap.

18 High-quality programs, what are
19 they? Yes, I want to answer your
20 question and just underscore what you've
21 already heard. We do know how to do it,
22 and it's not just about money. It's
23 about following principles in an
24 evidence-based way that have been secured
25 in the research labs around the world.

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2 What is high quality? It's
3 small group sizes. That's what you just
4 heard about in the CHOP program. It's
5 targeted learning, but targeted learning
6 doesn't mean targeted testing. It
7 doesn't mean that we have to go back to
8 No Child Left Behind and just move it
9 into preschool, but it does mean that we
10 have to have learning goals in mind, and
11 we have to create environments that are
12 developmentally appropriate where the
13 teachers are warm and engaging and
14 supportive with the children. We not
15 only know how to do it, but we know how
16 to create fidelity so that it's actually
17 being executed in the preschool programs.

18 Research on programs in Tulsa,
19 Oklahoma and in Boston, Massachusetts
20 note similar results with gains -- and I
21 think this is important -- between half
22 and a full year in academic readiness, in
23 reading, and math for those who attend
24 high-quality preschool programs. And you
25 already heard from the Pennsylvania

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2 Partnerships for Children that issued an
3 absolutely wonderful report, and in my
4 testimony I give you one of the graphs
5 from that report to show you that when
6 you have more stars, when you have more
7 quality, the children do better in
8 language and literacy, they do better in
9 mathematical thinking, they do better in
10 social development, which is indeed a key
11 foundation for learning all the way
12 through school. If you don't attend, you
13 can't learn. And also for scientific
14 thinking and the famous STEM that keeps
15 coming up in our discussions of
16 education - science, technology,
17 engineering, and math. Let me move to
18 point two.

19 The economic impact of strong
20 early childhood programs is substantial.
21 Economic reports consistently show that
22 preschool is merely a good societal
23 investment, with benefits ranging from \$3
24 to \$7 for every dollar spent. The
25 well-studied Perry Preschool Project and

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2 Chicago Child-Parent Center Project

3 recouped an astonishing 60 to 70 percent

4 of the preschool investment through

5 reduced criminal behavior later on as

6 children age into the teen years and

7 adulthood. The expensive and intensive

8 Abecedarian Project saved approximately

9 \$2.5 for every dollar invested. By age

10 21, that group that had the preschool

11 intervention had one-third of the

12 incarcerations that were noted in the

13 non-treatment group.

14 Estimates from the universal

15 preschool projects in Tulsa, Oklahoma

16 from reports out in 2012 -- so this is

17 recent large-scale stuff -- and in

18 California suggest savings of \$3 to \$5

19 for every dollar invested in preschool.

20 Not only are the effects promising for

21 long-term behavioral indices, but also

22 for short-term indices. And you already

23 heard this morning that Head Start is

24 screening for health issues. Just having

25 healthier children who will attend

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2 preschool more regularly and attend
3 school more regularly is a very big deal
4 when we want to talk about learning
5 outcomes.

6 Finally, a recent report out of
7 Canada, which has just revamped -- and
8 this is another wonderful example to look
9 to -- has revamped the early childhood
10 and made it a seamless transition into
11 their formal education system in
12 kindergarten and first grade, has what
13 they call Better Beginnings, Better
14 Futures. And that project found a
15 savings of \$912 per child with better
16 scores for those who attended
17 high-quality preschool programs.

18 My next point, point three,
19 early preschool education, is beneficial
20 for both low-income children and for
21 middle-income children. The majority of
22 the research in this area comes from
23 pre-K programs on low-income children,
24 and we have generally looked at
25 low-income children as not only those at

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2 the poverty line, but those who receive a
3 free lunch.

4 Rigorous studies coming out of
5 Oklahoma and Massachusetts demonstrate,
6 however, that middle-income children also
7 benefit from pre-K programs. They
8 benefit in language scores, in reading
9 scores, in math scores, and in social
10 outcomes. Low-income children who
11 attended high-quality pre-K were 11
12 months ahead of their peers when they
13 went to high-quality preschool programs.
14 The middle-class kids or the
15 middle-income kids were seven months
16 ahead. So it's not as if there's
17 nothing, even though there's greater gain
18 for the low-income families.

19 Point four, to be most
20 effective, we really have to look at
21 pre-preschool and what's going on in zero
22 to three. There's a famous study that's
23 on the lips of many people in Washington
24 by Hart and Risley. They, among many
25 others in our field, have found that by

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2 age three, low-income children are
3 already well behind their more advantaged
4 peers, especially in areas like language
5 and vocabulary learning, which is the
6 currency for doing well in school.
7 Dubbed as the 30 Million Word Gap -- and
8 we can go more into that if you'd like --
9 the findings suggest that waiting until
10 age four is simply too late. In fact, I
11 was just at a recent White House
12 conference as one of the spokespeople on
13 this issue, and we now have brain data
14 suggesting that in the first year of
15 life, there are differences in children
16 who do receive this kind of rich input in
17 stimulation and those who do not. They
18 are simply processing information more
19 efficiently.

20 Providence knows that. The
21 City of Providence applied for a grant,
22 and they got Providence Talks, and
23 they're now looking at 150 kids with the
24 home visitor system that you just heard
25 about from the Early Head Start CHOP

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2 program. We know how to train the people
3 who go into the homes, and there's every
4 reason to believe that this will make a
5 difference in the language scores of the
6 young children in Providence, Rhode
7 Island.

8 Also, Reach Out and Read is a
9 program that has been used by
10 pediatricians developed by a pediatrician
11 in New York City and another fabulous way
12 to help increase the vocabulary of our
13 young children before they get into the
14 kind of preschools that we're talking
15 about.

16 Research from my own lab also
17 shows that in the kind of baby geometry,
18 which is shape learning, squares,
19 triangles, and rectangles,
20 three-year-olds from low-income families
21 are already behind. We are seeing the
22 same achievement gap at age three in STEM
23 discipline that we have seen in language
24 and pre-literacy. So we need to act now.
25 They don't have blocks and sorting toys.

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2 And Point five, early childhood
3 intervention does not take place solely
4 in schools, but in informal environments
5 like community centers and homes. You've
6 already heard about the home visiting
7 projects.

8 Our tendency is to put our onus
9 on the preschools and to think of
10 teachers as the main conduit to redress
11 the achievement gap. Then we move on to
12 blame the teachers if it doesn't work.
13 I'd like to suggest that is woefully
14 unfair. We need to take a community
15 approach. If children are only spending
16 20 percent of their waking time in
17 school, I would ask, What are we doing to
18 explore ways to augment learning in the
19 community through our pediatricians, our
20 libraries, and through partnerships with
21 private businesses. In a project that we
22 just did in North Philadelphia with the
23 Fresh Grocer, we put up for \$35, we put
24 up signs in the Fresh Grocer and we
25 merely watched what happens when you

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2 said, I'm a delicious apple. Can you
3 find another apple? And we got a 33
4 percent increase in the amount of
5 language from parents to children when
6 the signs were up than when they were
7 down.

8 I put forth to you that we
9 could go into hospital clinics, to
10 supermarkets. We could go to ice cream
11 stores. We could go around the City,
12 laundromats, and we can do a better job
13 of finding ways to increase the language
14 skills of our children.

15 In cities like New York,
16 another example, when you walk outside of
17 Grand Central Station, you see quotes
18 that are in the sidewalk, things to talk
19 about. When you go into the New York
20 Central Park, you see poetry. When you
21 go into the subways, you see the Moving
22 Poetry Project.

23 What could we do in
24 Philadelphia to make the ordinary things
25 like park benches extraordinary and to

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2 encourage people to talk more, to think
3 more, to play more?

4 So I'd just like to suggest
5 again that there are five points that I
6 think we really do know about. We know
7 what to do. Large-scale, high-quality
8 programs have substantial and lasting
9 effects on social and academic outcomes
10 for our young children.

11 Two, the economic impact is
12 enormous, substantial for short-term and
13 long-term gains.

14 Three, early preschool
15 education helps both low-income and
16 middle-income children.

17 Four, to be most effective,
18 early childhood programs should start
19 early, in the zero to three period.

20 And, five, that early childhood
21 interventions don't take place solely in
22 schools, but also in informal
23 environments like our homes and in our
24 community centers, our libraries, and
25 even in our private businesses.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much.

5 Any questions?

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
8 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
10 afternoon.

11 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Hi.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The
13 enthusiasm of all of you comes through
14 clearly. It's a wonderful thing to see.

15 When I was in graduate school,
16 having to take some courses in early
17 childhood education, the findings then
18 that long ago were the first six years of
19 a child's life are most pivotal, and then
20 a few short years ago, we learn again
21 based on research that it's actually the
22 first 36 months that are most critical.
23 So it just speaks to how when you have
24 data and evidence to back it up, one
25 would think that that's compelling enough

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2 for policymakers and others to move the
3 needle differently.

4 The question I have is, I'm
5 deeply intrigued by the blend of art and
6 early literacy. Do you know more about
7 the New York project that you can talk
8 about?

9 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Well, I
10 know that it's there. I don't know that
11 it's been evaluated. However, I can tell
12 you that I'm actually looking at
13 precisely that question in some of the
14 research that we're doing right now in
15 arts-infused literacy and language. You
16 know, when children are active, when
17 they're engaged, when something is
18 meaningful for them, and when we give
19 them opportunities for social interaction
20 around a topic, they learn more, if we
21 just take those four rubrics or those
22 four principles.

23 So what have we found so far?
24 We found that when you do have
25 arts-infused education, like they have in

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2 some of the settlement schools in the
3 City, that the children actually get more
4 excited. They're more engaged. They're
5 learning not only topics like literacy
6 and language and talking about things,
7 but they're learning how to learn.

8 There is what we call the Six
9 Habits which have been developed up at
10 Harvard University, and indeed children
11 are more persistent. They show more
12 attention. They have a few like more
13 grit around the topic, and they're
14 learning interesting new vocabulary while
15 they're doing it. So it's a win-win.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: To any one
17 of you, off topic but very much related,
18 how do you or how can you or us as
19 educators and early childhood educators
20 convey excellence to children that young?
21 What does excellence look like for a
22 preschooler?

23 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Well --

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Any one or
25 all of you, because I'm struggling with

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2 this myself as it relates to another
3 project I'm working on.

4 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Sure.

5 Well, I think we actually know what
6 excellence is for a young child. I think
7 when a child shows, as my colleague and
8 friend Ellen Galinsky from the Family and
9 Work Institute, she wrote a fabulous book
10 called Mind in the Making.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Mind in
12 the Making?

13 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Mind in
14 the Making. And she talks about
15 excellence is finding the fire, lighting
16 the fire in a child's eyes. When a child
17 is engaged and wants to learn more and
18 wants to talk about it and wants to think
19 about it, I believe you have excellence
20 in learning in a preschool environment.

21 In my own work -- and my book
22 was called Einstein Never Used
23 Flashcards -- I think what we've created
24 is something of a learning illusion, and
25 I think the learning illusion came on the

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2 heels of a kind of No Child Left Behind
3 as we begin to look at the wrong kind of
4 accountability. Learning isn't about I
5 have memorized 16 letters of the A-B-C's.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Say that
7 again.

8 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: I said
9 learning isn't just about memorizing. In
10 fact, we know from years of research that
11 you can rote memorize something and it
12 won't be meaningful at all. I can tell
13 you that two plus one equals three and I
14 can be a robot, but believe me, if you
15 have a young three-year-old who got only
16 one scoop of ice cream when the
17 five-year-old got two scoops of ice
18 cream, they then understand quantity.

19 So our job is to make it
20 meaningful. Our job is to make it live
21 beyond the pages of what you're learning
22 and to transfer into something new. And
23 one of the biggest issues that we have in
24 American education today is that in our
25 international rankings, we stop at level

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2 three and four. Level three and four is,
3 I memorized it, but I can't use what I've
4 learned to go anywhere else.

5 I've been a consultant in early
6 childhood education in Singapore,
7 Singapore of all places, where you would
8 expect all they want for excellence is to
9 memorize the outcome, product not
10 process. And, in fact, they asked me to
11 come over because -- I said, You have the
12 wrong person. I wrote Einstein Never
13 Used Flashcards. I don't believe in
14 flashcards.

15 They said, No. That's
16 precisely where we're going.

17 When we look to our north, we
18 are looking at China, and we know that
19 China is revamping its entire early
20 childhood program, as you heard about
21 from Dominic earlier. They're asking all
22 of us to come over and help them, because
23 they don't want to be like us. They
24 don't want to just be memorizers. They
25 have invited people from the Peter

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2 Drucker Institute to revamp their
3 education system over the next three
4 years.

5 Singapore also says when we
6 look over to our west, we see what's
7 going on in India. We're a city state.
8 If we're going to survive in what is
9 really the grand economy, world economy,
10 global economy with 21st century skills,
11 our people need to know not just how to
12 test, but how to think.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Who wrote
14 the book Mind in the Making?

15 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Mind in
16 the Making is Ellen Galinsky,
17 G-A-L-I-N-S-K-Y.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
19 Thank you all for your testimony.

20 Might either of the other
21 witnesses have a comment, observation or
22 perspective about what excellence looks
23 like in little people?

24 MS. JACKSON: Yes. I don't
25 know if this is on or not.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: She's
3 the next anyway to testify.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Oh, okay.

5 MS. JACKSON: When I thought
6 about excellence in thinking about the
7 children, our little people, I think
8 about brain, when the light bulb go off.
9 When you look in their eyes and you can
10 see that they really feel that they got
11 it. So it's not about, as we said,
12 flashcards and recognizing letters, but
13 just looking in their face and looking in
14 their eyes and you can just see that
15 light bulb just went off and they really,
16 really -- they got it.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. LINARDOPOULOS:
20 Councilwoman, I think that's a really
21 important question that you asked, and I
22 think that the problem is that
23 oftentimes, particularly in the very
24 younger grades, it's not measurable, and
25 when things are not measurable, they're

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2 not provable because they can't be put
3 into a graph on a piece of paper. And I
4 think that in my experiences as a
5 kindergarten and as a third grade
6 teacher, the times that I would be most
7 surprised and most moved and most "Oh, my
8 gosh, my students are amazing human
9 beings" is when we went on a field trip.
10 And it would always be the kid that I
11 thought, Oh, my gosh, I'm going to bring
12 this child on a field trip and I am so
13 nervous about what will happen. I'm so
14 nervous about is there going to be a
15 behavior issue or am I going to -- just
16 all the things that go through a
17 teacher's mind, and it was always a risk.
18 That would be the best behaved and the
19 most engaged child who asked the most
20 tremendous and amazing questions and who,
21 you know, sort of would win the crowd
22 over at the -- whether it was at a museum
23 or at a play or just sort of be the, Oh,
24 my goodness, that child is brilliant.
25 And that's not measurable, aside from

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2 anecdotal records, which I think are
3 going to be essential as we continue down
4 this path. We are going to have to start
5 telling the stories of what happened on a
6 field trip when a kindergartner who had
7 behavioral troubles left and right,
8 couldn't get quite the memorization of
9 the alphabet letters down, but could look
10 in the Philadelphia Art Museum and
11 describe a Matisse painting or describe
12 this or what's this, what's this, asking
13 questions that I wouldn't have thought to
14 ask myself. And I think that as we move
15 forward, recognizing that prescribing a
16 curriculum to an entire body of students
17 is not going to be the answer. It's sort
18 of a paradox.

19 The students that -- the
20 schools that are doing, quote/unquote,
21 well -- and we define "well" by test
22 scores in this current moment -- they get
23 more flexibility in their curriculum.
24 They're allowed to do more project-based
25 learning. The schools that are

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2 underachieving, underperforming, however
3 you want to call it, they don't, and it
4 sort of perpetuates itself.

5 I remember my students when I
6 was a third grade teacher when after the
7 PSSA was done and we had a couple months
8 left in the school year --

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: They
10 probably took a deep breath.

11 MR. LINARDOPOULOS: -- we got
12 so much done, the kids, and it was --
13 there was more flexibility and more time
14 to do -- you know, to read Matilda by
15 Roald Dahl and then watch the movie and
16 to analyze it and compare and contrast
17 the movie and the book and to do things
18 that are meaningful and things that the
19 kids are going to remember and that -- it
20 was not measured. So the test scores of
21 my class were from March or April.
22 They're not measured in those last two
23 months of cool, fun stuff.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So here's
25 my last question: How can we as

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2 educators convey excellence to little
3 people? Can we? So we know when we see
4 it. Can we teach it early?

5 MR. LINARDOPOULOS: Absolutely.
6 I think that it starts with high
7 expectations and it starts with talking
8 to them about big things and it starts
9 with exposing kindergartners to art and
10 showing them famous paintings and
11 teaching them to say Vincent Van Gogh and
12 teaching them to -- you know, they feel
13 empowered when they know those fancy big
14 words and they can go home and talk to
15 their parents about that famous artist,
16 and there's always, you know, something
17 that they can go share with their
18 parents. Did you know Picasso did X, Y,
19 and Z? And they're never too young for
20 that. And I think that the expecting
21 that that is going to be absorbed by our
22 young people, that's showing them
23 excellence and, you know, it's not --
24 that's rigorous teaching and it's hard to
25 measure.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very
3 helpful.

4 Yes.

5 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: I just
6 wanted to add a couple things, because
7 such wonderful comments. Two pieces.
8 One is that we can convey it, I think,
9 not only by having expectations, but by
10 understanding that what a lot of our
11 low-income kids are missing is an
12 understanding the world around them in a
13 way that makes sense and is meaningful.
14 And whether you convey it through Picasso
15 or whether you talk about how a machine
16 works, a farm tool doesn't matter. What
17 does matter is that we're trying to make
18 a meaningful, almost thematic -- and I
19 would argue thematic is a great way to
20 go -- thematic kind of education for them
21 to figure out what's going on in the
22 world.

23 If I may step back. I just
24 wanted to give one other tool that I
25 think will be useful I think down the

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2 line of questioning you're asking.

3 We do have to have some
4 accountability, and I guess the question
5 has always -- we've struggled with
6 this -- how would we know if we're being
7 successful, if we're really conveying it.
8 And we are developing at Temple
9 University several ways to look at that
10 question, and there are things in the
11 field to look at it. Are the children --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: For
13 children, preschoolers?

14 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: For
15 young children. We know whether they
16 have decent language skills. We can
17 measure that. That's not to say that it
18 should be, "And you failed." But it
19 should be done as a way of finding out
20 where children are in the trajectory,
21 because we can't ever get you to a level
22 where you have high enough vocabulary
23 skills that you're going to make it by
24 third grade and be a third grade reader
25 in third grade if you don't have the

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2 language skills down at age three. It's
3 impossible.

4 So I think we need to start
5 looking early at what that trajectory is.
6 We're doing the same thing with some of
7 the spacial and early mathematic skills
8 where we're coming up with tasks right
9 now that would just give us a kind of
10 earmark as to where are you on the scale
11 so that we can follow it.

12 Secondly, I just want to bring
13 back Dominic's earlier point. We can
14 also look inside the school to see is the
15 teacher warm, is the class size small
16 enough, are they actually engaging with
17 the children around the real-world issues
18 that you just spoke about. We know how
19 to look at that to measure that. So from
20 the classroom perspective and from the
21 child perspective and using the evidence
22 as our base, I think we can create a
23 preschool and actually ask are we being
24 effective in communicating the kind of
25 stuff kids need to learn.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very

3 helpful. Thank you.

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

6 Certainly. Thank you very much.

7 Ms. Renee Queen Jackson, Deputy

8 Chief, Office of Early Childhood

9 Education. Thank you.

10 MS. JACKSON: And I just want
11 to thank all of you for inviting me here
12 for this opportunity.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Pull
14 your mic a little closer.

15 MS. JACKSON: Yes. And I just
16 want to say that all of those that
17 testified earlier, the research and the
18 information that was given, I totally
19 agree with all of it as it relates to
20 early childhood.

21 So much of what I will cover
22 had been mentioned, but it's important
23 enough to repeat. So we know quality
24 pre-K programming works and access to
25 high-quality pre-K gives children the

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2 opportunity to enter school ready to
3 learn. And that's one of the main goals,
4 to prepare them to enter school ready to
5 learn.

6 So science tells us that early
7 experiences shape the development of a
8 young child's brain or we call it brain
9 architecture. So simple skills come
10 first. The more complex skills build on
11 top of those skills. So a strong
12 foundation in the early years improves
13 the odds for positive outcomes, and a
14 weak foundation increases the odds for
15 problems later in life.

16 This strong foundation is laid
17 through nurturing early learning
18 environments, good nutrition, health and
19 well-being, which are all components of a
20 high-quality early learning experience.

21 So educational investment must
22 begin in the early years -- we all know
23 that. We've heard it over and over
24 again, the importance of it --
25 specifically for children at risk of

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2 school failure before the achievement gap
3 is too wide and very costly to overcome.

4 Results from the Adverse Childhood

5 Experience, also known as the ACE study

6 from the Center for Disease Control,

7 showed that persons who had experienced

8 four or more categories of childhood

9 exposure to toxic stress compared to

10 those who experienced none were more

11 likely to adopt high-risk behaviors,

12 leading to a great propensity for severe

13 health problems and possibly early death.

14 So the ACE study includes emotional,

15 physical or sexual abuse; emotional or

16 physical neglect; and exposure to

17 household dysfunction such as alcoholism,

18 drug use, and spousal abuse. So these

19 experiences are detrimental to healthy

20 development and costly to society. But

21 the good news is is that high-quality

22 early childhood programs can begin to

23 address these issues.

24 Immediate benefits of pre-K

25 participation includes significant gains

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2 in vocabulary, early math skills, early
3 writing skills, phonemic awareness, story
4 and print concepts, cooperative classroom
5 behaviors dealing with the
6 social-emotional skills. Long-term
7 benefits include higher graduation rates,
8 college enrollment, fewer grade
9 retentions or referrals for special
10 education, and adults who are less likely
11 to participate in criminal activities.

12 So despite its many benefits,
13 far too many families in Philadelphia
14 simply do not have access to or cannot
15 afford to enroll their children in
16 high-quality pre-K and they often resort
17 to programs that lack the elements
18 essential to their child's success.

19 For decades, the School
20 District's pre-K programs have
21 successfully prepared at-risk children
22 for kindergarten through various
23 programs. If you remember, we had Get
24 Set, Head Start, Comprehensive Early
25 Learning Centers, Focus on Fours, Pre-K

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2 Counts, and Bright Futures, just to name
3 a few. And although quality pre-K
4 programming is critical to Philadelphia's
5 economic future, the School District is
6 not able to keep up with the costs of
7 providing pre-K programming with its
8 increased costs and flat grant funding.

9 So early learning investment is
10 a smart choice during challenging
11 economic times. According to the
12 statistics from Pre-K for Pennsylvania,
13 every dollar invested in early learning
14 generates over \$2 in local economic
15 impact and up to \$17 in long-term public
16 savings and benefits.

17 ReadyNation a business leader
18 partnership, notes we rarely have the
19 luxury of making business investment
20 decisions with as much evidence as we
21 have to support the economic value of
22 investing in early childhood.

23 So an advocate and grandparent
24 of ten children in the School District of
25 Philadelphia, four in pre-K, I hope that

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2 the City of Philadelphia will continue to
3 invest in early childhood programming,
4 because we know that college preparation
5 begins in pre-K, in early childhood
6 programs.

7 Thank you, and if there are
8 questions, I'm able to answer for you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you.

11 Question, will more seats be --
12 will we lose more seats for childhood ed?
13 And I want to ask you also about
14 outsourcing, because everybody says day
15 care providers have these Bright Stars
16 company gets all of the contracts and
17 they don't.

18 MS. JACKSON: Okay. So the
19 first question, there will be no loss of
20 seats for pre-K programming in the School
21 District of Philadelphia. We're actually
22 looking for support and investing to
23 increase seats. I put in a
24 recommendation to increase seats over a
25 five-year period, looking to increase at

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2 least 200 seats for the FY15 school year.

3 Through our Head Start program
4 last year during sequestration, you know,
5 we lost 258 seats, which will be restored
6 for FY15. So we will be bringing back
7 those 258 seats, which we're excited
8 about. But there will be no loss of
9 pre-K seats at all through the School
10 District of Philadelphia for the FY15
11 school year.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Great.

13 MS. JACKSON: Your second
14 question around restructuring, you know,
15 we restructured our pre-K program last
16 year due to some loss of Title I funding
17 where we outsourced some of our pre-K
18 slots to our contracted community
19 childcare partners. Since last year,
20 we've been monitoring and working with
21 our community partners to make sure that
22 high quality has not been lost in the
23 process, and we will have a report that
24 we will submit to the SRC in May or June
25 to give the information around how we

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2 feel we did with that restructuring,
3 looking at our data and where the
4 children are with the early literacy
5 skills as well as their social-emotional
6 skills.

7 No one program -- you said
8 something about Brightside Academy. When
9 we did the restructuring, you know, we
10 went through the RFP process where it was
11 a very rigorous process to make sure that
12 any -- the contracted community partners
13 that we partnered with were in the
14 Keystone STARS system. They had to be a
15 STAR 3 and they had to meet our
16 evaluation criteria in order to be a
17 partner, because, as you know, they are
18 under our Head Start program dollars. So
19 we are held responsible for making sure
20 that high quality is continued and that
21 they meet the guidelines of the Head
22 Start performance standards.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you.

25 Any further questions?

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2 Councilman Oh.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
4 much.

5 I actually do have a question
6 for actually Professor Hirsh-Pasek and
7 anyone else who would like to chime in,
8 but specifically because you do child
9 psychology.

10 So you had mentioned the term
11 in your testimony "grit," and I'd like to
12 ask if in your research you have
13 identified communities that tend to
14 instill in young people more of that grit
15 and societies that tend to have young
16 people who quit very early, and what is
17 the difference.

18 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: That's
19 such a great question. Thank you for
20 asking it. Well, the expert on grit is
21 actually just down the street at the
22 University of Pennsylvania, Angela
23 Duckworth, and a lot of that research is
24 just getting underway right now, what
25 keeps someone on task and what does not.

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2 There are a couple of things
3 that we know takes people off task, and
4 that is -- believe it or not, we all
5 think that we're great multi-taskers, but
6 only 2 percent of us can really
7 multi-task well, which is why it's not a
8 really good idea to drive and text at the
9 same time. So we think it's just in
10 driving and texting, but the truth is,
11 we're engaged in a massive natural
12 experiment right now. Parents aren't
13 talking to kids because they're out with
14 their cell phones all the time reading
15 the texts as they come in. Kids are
16 spending a lot of screen time, and we
17 don't really know at this point, because
18 we're just starting to study it, what the
19 impact of having so much screen time is.
20 We're talking four hours a day for little
21 people right now, and for low-income
22 folks who are eight and older, it's eight
23 to ten hours a day, and if you project
24 that out, it's more than a full-time job.

25 So we know that people are

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2 distracted and we know that a lot of the
3 apps that are so-called educational apps
4 have things that sort of come in with
5 games in the middle of story books, and
6 that actually has been looked at. I've
7 looked at it and others have looked at
8 it. What happens is the child doesn't
9 even know the plot of the story because
10 they're so busy pressing buttons. It
11 turns out, though, one of my favorites is
12 biting the dust on this, which is pop-up
13 books for little kids. It turns out the
14 pop-up in the pop-up book is also
15 distracting. So distractors are a big
16 way to ruin grit.

17 When it comes to -- and a good
18 way to have grit is to have things as I
19 mentioned before that are meaningful to
20 us and that light that fire that you
21 talked about as well, because when
22 children are interested in something,
23 they'll stay on topic, and when they're
24 bored by it, they'll get off topic.

25 Now, I'm going to give a

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2 speculation which is not based on
3 research, but I would say that societies
4 like Finland are doing a way better job
5 than we are. We've become so accountable
6 on the basis of test scores and
7 memorization that quite often the kids
8 don't know the meaning behind the thing
9 they've just memorized and, as a result,
10 they don't stay on it. They do just what
11 they need to do to get through the test.
12 And we reinforce that in Pennsylvania --
13 I'm sure it's true in other states too --
14 when we have some two months prior to the
15 time when you're taking the test. You
16 are preparing for the test. And one of
17 my favorites that illustrated this was in
18 Florida when I was giving a speech there
19 when they just ushered in universal pre-K
20 and one of the women in the audience
21 said, Well, what should we do about the
22 FCAT pledge?

23 The FCAT pledge, I said. What
24 could it possibly be? And she wrote it
25 down for me, and the little third graders

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2 were supposed to stand up, put their hand
3 on their heart and say, I will memorize
4 what I need to before the test. I will
5 have a good breakfast before the test.

6 So if we want to instill grit,
7 we have to get off of this, it's just
8 about the test, it's just about the
9 memorization, into meaning and less about
10 distraction. I think the Finns are the
11 example everybody holds up as the folks
12 who are sort of doing it right right now.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: So then let me
14 shift the question a little bit. So
15 let's talk about grit of the Finnish
16 people, because they started this in
17 1960, I suppose, and continuously stuck
18 with an education model, believed in it,
19 and now they are reaping the rewards of a
20 robust economy and everything else.

21 But you mentioned Singapore,
22 and I think about Hong Kong, which
23 transitioned from a manufacturing and
24 they transitioned there their public
25 school system very similarly.

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2 I mean, what is it do you think
3 about societies that really respect their
4 experts, give credit to their
5 professionals, believe in their teaching
6 system and stick with it for decades?
7 And what is it about societies that just
8 can't seem to do that, they can't seem to
9 stick with it?

10 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Oh,
11 gosh. That's a bigger question than I
12 could probably answer. My speculation on
13 that is that we are a paper plate
14 society. We expect immediate rewards,
15 and we throw away what we don't like
16 instantly. What we're not so good at --
17 and this is true, by the way, not only in
18 the education field, but has also been
19 true in environmental science, and I
20 think it's why it's so deeply difficult
21 for us to get a lot of passage of
22 environmental bills or even to have
23 people believe in climate change when
24 there's another place that I think the
25 evidence is so secure in the scientific

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2 community.

3 You know, it's a problem that
4 you have to have a long-range vision.
5 Our preschoolers are our business leaders
6 of tomorrow. They're the ones who are in
7 preschool today. And if we mess it up
8 today for our three- and four-year-olds,
9 we will reap those benefits 20 years from
10 now when these kids can't do well in
11 college, when we already are seeing the
12 first generation of children who were
13 under No Child Left Behind are in our
14 colleges right now, and some 20 to 25
15 percent of them are dropping out.

16 So I think the societies that
17 are making it work, they pay their
18 teachers well, they train their teachers
19 well. And we've already heard about the
20 training that's going to be required.
21 They support the teachers when they're in
22 the classroom through the coaching and
23 the kind of mentoring, and they respect
24 their expertise and hire for expertise,
25 as you wouldn't get out of a school

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2 system in Finland today knowing how to
3 run a projector and say we need to fill a
4 classroom, will you go in. They have
5 real teachers who are as professional as
6 the bankers and who are as respected as
7 the bankers.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: My last
9 comment, it seems so obvious. Why is it
10 so hard for us to implement that? It's
11 so frustrating. It must be very
12 frustrating for you. I mean, what I'm
13 saying is, what's wrong with us on this
14 side, us, the politicians? You know,
15 what are we not doing here that -- what
16 do you see that we here in Philadelphia,
17 for example, in our system, our State of
18 Pennsylvania when you look at -- you just
19 went to Singapore. You're looking at
20 China. You were in Seoul, and you just
21 talked about Finland. It must be
22 frustrating to say, Hey, look at all
23 these places that are doing it right.
24 What have you identified about us? And I
25 honestly have to say "us" includes all of

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2 us.

3 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: All of
4 us, yes.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: All of us here
6 in this city. For example, like what is
7 it about our mentality? What are we
8 challenged with?

9 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Well,
10 again, only speculation, but what I have
11 seen that is very, very different is that
12 we don't hold hands and go to solve a
13 problem together in our country. This is
14 the first time I've ever been here to
15 speak to your illustrious Council. And
16 I'm not saying it should be me, but I
17 don't know how many academicians actually
18 are invited. I know that when NBC does
19 its Education Nation every year, I rarely
20 see a teacher. I rarely see a scientist.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Excuse
22 me one moment, please. I neglected to
23 mention that Councilwoman Cindy Bass has
24 been here all morning. Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you.

4 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Hi.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
6 afternoon.

7 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Many of
8 us sitting in this room, we have pockets
9 of people who know each other, but I
10 would suggest to you that we probably
11 don't all know each other, because
12 there's never been an initiative to say,
13 Let's all sit around one table and let's
14 try to solve this. I mean, as I look at
15 other cities around the world, I see the
16 children's museum sitting with the
17 schools. I see the schools sitting with
18 the councils and the politicians. I see
19 the artists who work with children and
20 the libraries. And Philadelphia has such
21 a rich history, as do many American
22 cities, that I think if we all -- this is
23 probably my naive optimism, and I'll
24 apologize for it at the beginning. But I
25 really believe in an issue this important

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2 to the nation's and the City's future,
3 that if we all sat around together and
4 came up with a set of principles as if we
5 were a business with a mission or a
6 non-profit with a mission, these are
7 solvable problems.

8 In our field we know what to
9 do. I mean, Dominic and I and many
10 others at the institutions around this
11 city working with the teachers, working
12 with the schools, we know what to do. We
13 just have to have the will and the
14 long-term commitment to do it.

15 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

16 Thank you very much.

17 Thank you, Chairwoman.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much.

20 Any more questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you very much.

24 The Clerk will read the next
25 panel.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

3 Councilwoman?

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

5 Councilwoman Bass.

6 One moment, please, everybody.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.

8 To the previous speaker, I just wanted to
9 echo your comments, because one of the
10 things that I agree that we don't do
11 enough or we don't do well enough in the
12 City of Philadelphia is we don't sort of
13 connect the dots and who is doing what,
14 what are you working on, how is it that
15 what you're working on, how will that
16 affect what I'm working on. So it's just
17 really some basic communication and
18 strategizing among interested parties,
19 which really should be everybody, I think
20 will really go a long way. And I just
21 wanted to acknowledge that. Because we
22 were in another hearing yesterday on a
23 completely different topic and I made
24 almost the very same comments about how
25 we don't coordinate.

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2 If we're doing something around
3 transportation, we should have all the
4 players around transportation together,
5 and here we are talking about education
6 and it's really the same thing. If we're
7 going to talk about moving public
8 education forward in a significant way,
9 everybody really has to be at the table.

10 So I just wanted to echo those
11 comments. And also I just wanted to say
12 about our Chair Lady, I just wanted to
13 thank her as well, because she always
14 gives us timely, important information
15 about education here in the City of
16 Philadelphia. And I think a lot of
17 people really just don't know. I mean,
18 they see this here and maybe they're here
19 today or they see it on television, but
20 they may not know about all the briefings
21 that she does for us probably on a weekly
22 basis. Every week we get a new briefing
23 on education and what's happening, and it
24 really does help us to stay informed, so
25 I just wanted to thank you for that.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you, Councilwoman. Thank you very much.
4 Thanks for all the support.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Absolutely.

6 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: Is it
7 possible to mention one more thing?

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,
9 ma'am.

10 PROFESSOR HIRSH-PASEK: I just
11 wanted to let you know in response to you
12 that I guess it's about three or four
13 years ago, I did something in the City of
14 New York called the Ultimate Block Party.
15 There were a crew of us that got this
16 together, and we took over Central Park,
17 and we got all the people around the same
18 table from the parks, the libraries,
19 non-profits, for-profits, and we all
20 talked about the state of what could be
21 done for young children. Baltimore
22 followed suit and actually Toronto,
23 Canada. And it's so exciting what can be
24 done if we do what you've outlined. And
25 so thank you, thank you, thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much. Thank you.

5 Clerk, please read the next
6 panel.

7 THE CLERK: Mr. DeWayne
8 Drummond, Mantua Civic Association;
9 Ms. Helen Eaton, Executive Director from
10 the Settlement Music School; Ms. Leslie
11 Winder, Chairwoman of the Board from
12 Public Citizens for Children and Youth;
13 and Ms. Jodi Askins, Executive Director,
14 Pennsylvania Association for the
15 Education of Young Children.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
17 note that Ms. Mary Graham, Executive
18 Director of Children's Village, could not
19 be here. She's sick today, but her
20 testimony will be read into the record as
21 though she were.

22 (Witnesses approached witness
23 table.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you all. Feel free to begin. Ms. Eaton,

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2 why don't you begin. They tell me you
3 have to go.

4 MS. EATON: Great. Thank you
5 very much.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're
7 welcome.

8 MS. EATON: Good morning. My
9 name is Helen Eaton and I'm Executive
10 Director of Settlement Music School. I
11 commend Councilwoman Blackwell for
12 convening these hearings to discuss the
13 social and economic benefits of early
14 childhood education.

15 First, I'd like to take a
16 moment to tell you about Settlement.
17 Since its founding over 100 years ago,
18 the school has grown to become the
19 largest community school of the arts in
20 America and a leader in the six
21 neighborhoods where its branches are
22 located, including South and Northeast
23 Philadelphia, Wynnefield, Germantown,
24 Willow Grove, and Camden, New Jersey; in
25 the City of Philadelphia; and in the

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2 national community music school movement.

3 We primarily offer after-school and

4 weekend individual and class instruction

5 in music and dance. Our programs are

6 available to all in the Philadelphia

7 community. At Settlement, no child is

8 turned away because of cost. This year

9 we expect to distribute over \$2 million

10 in financial aid to students who

11 demonstrate need.

12 Today I want to focus on one of

13 Settlement's programs, Settlement's

14 Kaleidoscope Preschool Arts-Enrichment

15 Program.

16 There is a growing consensus in

17 this country about the importance of

18 early childhood education. Most

19 recently, a new advocacy group, Pre-K for

20 PA, is taking action so that all three-

21 and four-year-old children in

22 Pennsylvania have access to quality

23 preschool education. Moreover, numerous

24 studies have demonstrated the positive

25 effects of a preschool education for

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2 children from low-income families. In
3 short, a preschool program leads its
4 students on the pathway to greater
5 social, academic, and economic success.

6 But all preschool is not
7 created equal. Settlement's Kaleidoscope
8 arts-integrated curriculum has been
9 proven to level the playing field when
10 kindergarten starts for children from
11 underserved neighborhoods.

12 Here are the details:
13 Kaleidoscope is a 40-week, full-day, Head
14 Start-accredited pre-kindergarten program
15 for low-income underserved children. The
16 program has 113 students at our South
17 Philadelphia and Germantown branches,
18 with 88 percent of the students attending
19 tuition free and the remainder paying on
20 a sliding scale. Since its inception in
21 1990, the program has taught about 1,500
22 students.

23 The program's uniqueness and
24 really its transformative aspect is in
25 the arts-integrated curriculum. Besides

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2 a traditional homeroom, each child goes
3 to three separate dedicated arts-based
4 classrooms - music, dance and fine arts -
5 each staffed by professional artist
6 teachers of the highest quality.

7 In addition, the program was
8 developed so that each classroom works
9 together on similar concepts, but from
10 their own unique perspective. For
11 example, if the day's learning concept is
12 shapes, the children start the day
13 learning about shapes by labeling them in
14 their early learning class. They then go
15 to the art studio, put on smocks, and
16 paint shapes. Next they are greeted at
17 the dance studio where the students take
18 off their shoes and dance forming shapes
19 with their bodies. Then they go to the
20 music studio where they pick instruments
21 of different shapes to play. In total,
22 students receive 320 hours of
23 studio-based arts taught by professional
24 artist teachers per year, exponentially
25 more than most students receive in

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2 traditional preschools.

3 This arts-integrated process
4 reinforces these learning concepts, but
5 also acknowledges that children learn in
6 different ways. Drawing may help one
7 child, while dancing may help another
8 child and singing may help a different
9 child. Such a comprehensive curriculum
10 is simply not available to the vast
11 majority of preschools in the country.
12 It is truly a unique learning experience,
13 and I invite all of you to come to our
14 South Philadelphia branch, take a tour of
15 the program, and see for yourself how the
16 arts-integrated curriculum pulls together
17 all of the different learning concepts
18 and teaches them in a creative and
19 effective manner.

20 Academic research confirms the
21 transformative effect of Kaleidoscope's
22 arts-integrated approach to early
23 childhood education. Dr. Eleanor Brown
24 of West Chester University has been
25 engaged since 2006 on a series of studies

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2 that document outcomes of the
3 Kaleidoscope program. Dr. Brown's first
4 findings, published in 2010, demonstrated
5 what we were already seeing, an
6 arts-based preschool is very effective
7 for at-risk communities. When compared
8 to a peer program, Dr. Brown showed that
9 children from impoverished backgrounds
10 made significant strides in school
11 readiness. In fact, Kaleidoscope
12 students made advances three times higher
13 in receptive vocabulary, a key predictor
14 of school success.

15 In 2013, Dr. Brown published a
16 second study, which I've attached to this
17 testimony, that documents that
18 Kaleidoscope students experience more
19 positive emotions, like interest,
20 happiness, and pride, and increased their
21 ability to regulate emotions, all of
22 which have long-term impacts on a child's
23 ability to learn. We see this every day.
24 A child who was once disruptive now
25 becomes a happy participant in the music

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2 studio. Another child who initially was
3 quiet and distant becomes involved and
4 friendly through participating in an arts
5 project. The art aspects of the program
6 bring out these positive behaviors in the
7 children, help remove obstacles to
8 learning, and help prepare students for
9 success in kindergarten and grade school.

10 Professor Brown is currently
11 gathering data regarding the
12 physiological benefits of Kaleidoscope.
13 She is measuring Kaleidoscope students
14 cortisol levels, known as the stress
15 hormone. Her theory is that just as
16 poverty can get under the skin resulting
17 in measurable physiological effects, so
18 too can Kaleidoscope get under the skin
19 to effectively help alleviate the
20 cortisol levels, thus the stress of its
21 students.

22 In March 2011, the NEA and the
23 U.S. Department of Health and Human
24 Services convened an interagency task
25 force to address the effect that arts

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2 programs can have for people of different
3 ages. Professor Brown's research was
4 prominently recognized at the meeting as
5 evidence of the need for the arts in
6 early childhood education and in the
7 subsequently published federal white
8 paper.

9 So accepting the research done
10 on Kaleidoscope and that an
11 arts-integrated curriculum is best for an
12 early childhood education, what do we do
13 next? The first option is simply to
14 expand Kaleidoscope to serve more
15 students. However, a program of that
16 quality comes at a cost. Currently,
17 Kaleidoscope has 113 students with about
18 100 receiving Head Start funding.
19 Settlement must still raise about
20 \$300,000 of the program's \$1.1 million
21 budget. Therefore, expanding the program
22 would require a steep economic commitment
23 by the government, policymakers, funders,
24 and concerned citizens.

25 Alternatively, we can broaden

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2 another program that already exists. The
3 Teacher Training Institute for the Arts,
4 which we run out of the Kaleidoscope
5 program, disseminates best practice
6 techniques and findings of the
7 Kaleidoscope program to a broader array
8 of early childhood education groups and
9 preschool, elementary school, and arts
10 teachers of young children. Through the
11 Teacher Training Institute, Kaleidoscope
12 staff and faculty provide courses,
13 workshops, and presentations throughout
14 the year that offer successful strategies
15 for integrating the arts into early
16 childhood education programs. In the
17 past two years, we are delighted that the
18 following organizations have joined us in
19 our efforts to bring quality early
20 childhood programming to a broader
21 public: The National Association for the
22 Education of Young Children, the Delaware
23 Valley Association for the Education of
24 Young Children, the Pennsylvania Child
25 Care Association, the Early Childhood

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2 Education Summit, the Congress on
3 Research and Dance, Holy Family
4 University, Diversified Community
5 Services, which includes the Western
6 Learning Center and the Dixon Learning
7 Academy.

8 In conclusion, I believe we all
9 want the same thing. We all want the
10 children in the Philadelphia community to
11 have a quality early childhood education.
12 The question is, what does a quality
13 early childhood education look like? I
14 believe that an arts-integrated
15 curriculum like the one in Kaleidoscope
16 is an essential aspect of a quality early
17 childhood education program. It helps
18 all children effectively develop early
19 learning skills. At the same time, it
20 helps to level the playing field and
21 gives children from underserved
22 communities the opportunity to be
23 successful when they move on to
24 kindergarten and beyond.

25 Thank you, Councilwoman

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2 Blackwell, for arranging this hearing on
3 such an important issue and allowing me
4 to present my thoughts on early childhood
5 education. There are few issues more
6 essential to the health of the City than
7 the education of our city's youth. We
8 will need our children to have a
9 high-quality education to meet
10 Philadelphia's changing economic
11 landscape and meet the challenges of a
12 technologically innovative future. I am
13 honored to participate in this
14 discussion. I believe that together we
15 can move forward on this important issue.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you very much. I've always said we have
19 excellent programs in the City, but we
20 don't have them universally, and that's
21 what makes life unfair.

22 Questions?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much.

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2 MS. EATON: I wanted to say
3 thank you. Unfortunately, I have a prior
4 appointment, so I'm going to have to
5 leave. I really appreciate presenting
6 today. Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you. Thank you very much.

9 DeWayne Drummond.

10 MR. DRUMMOND: Good afternoon,
11 Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilman David
12 Oh. My name is DeWayne Drummond and I'm
13 the President of the Mantua Civic
14 Association, and I just wanted to tell
15 you all my testimony concerning early
16 childhood education.

17 In 1983, I went to the Morton
18 McMichael Elementary School Head Start
19 program. In '85, I transitioned out of
20 the Head Start program and went to Morton
21 McMichael School, which is located in the
22 Mantua section of Philadelphia.

23 Just speeding forward to when I
24 became a father and I had my first
25 daughter, my daughter, I enrolled her in

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2 a Head Start program. At that time, I
3 didn't have no job, but one thing that I
4 realized, that Head Start had a lot of
5 social services there for parents. So as
6 I began to take my daughter to school,
7 they started to engage me, and that was
8 something that wasn't really normal, that
9 these people in this early childhood
10 center actually cared for me and they
11 wanted to help me to become
12 self-sufficient and the best parent that
13 I can be for my child.

14 Through that whole process, I
15 started learning more about the program.
16 I got more engaged in the program, and I
17 realized that they was having meetings at
18 the center. So I got engaged and I
19 started participating in these meetings.
20 So I started participating so much that
21 the parents said, You should be the
22 Chairperson of this center meeting.

23 So I said, Okay. I could do
24 this. And we did -- it was more than
25 fundraisers. It was bringing resources

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2 to the centers, bringing LIHEAP, PECO,
3 talking to City Councilpeople and letting
4 them know that we, the early childhood
5 parents, are your constituents, can you
6 help us out to avoid this war on poverty.
7 Through that, being at the center
8 committee level, I went on to a bigger
9 group, which is called the Policy Council
10 group, and I served for two terms as the
11 Chairman of Policy Council. Through that
12 whole process, I gained leadership and I
13 also realized one thing that it didn't
14 really dawn on me that I was this, that I
15 was my child's first teacher, and the
16 teacher that was in the classroom was
17 just there to support me. So the things
18 that my daughter learned at school, I
19 needed to take it in my home and
20 implement it in that child's life. This
21 is what early childhood has done for me.

22 Through that, being on Policy
23 Council, it took me on almost in my three
24 years being on Policy Council to over 18
25 conferences nationwide. It took me up on

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2 Capitol Hill to be an advocate and talk
3 to Congressman Chaka Fattah and State
4 Senator Bob Brady -- I mean Congressman
5 Brady and Bob Casey, the Senator, and let
6 them know that Head Start worked, that
7 early childhood education worked.

8 Then I had another child, and
9 she was one and a half years old. I
10 entered her into Children's Hospital,
11 CHOP, Early Head Start, something that I
12 didn't know about from zero to three. I
13 thought early childhood was only from
14 three to five, but it goes from zero to
15 eight. And dealing with Early Head
16 Start, it just let me know what is this,
17 this early childhood, that early
18 childhood is very, very important. And
19 then being a parent there at Early Head
20 Start, I was able to let these people in
21 my home and didn't feel threatened.
22 Usually some parents don't want social
23 services coming in there in your home,
24 but they came in my home and helped me
25 out, and not only myself, my whole family

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2 out.

3 Still serving on the Policy
4 Council, it gave me great opportunities
5 to go to Washington, DC to sit on the
6 National Think Tank where there was only
7 12 parents, and they had a domain that
8 they wanted to produce. It was a seven
9 domain. It was called Parent, Family,
10 and Community Engagement. And I'm going
11 to say that again. Parent, Family, and
12 Community Engagement. That is important
13 when it comes down to early childhood
14 education, because it's just more than
15 the parents and the child. It's
16 families, it's grandparents that's taking
17 their kids to these early childhood
18 centers. It's foster parents that's
19 taking they child to these early
20 childhood centers. It's neighbors,
21 aunts, uncles, cousins. And not only
22 that, these early childhood centers are
23 in communities. So we need community
24 support. Communities have to know where
25 these early childhood centers -- what are

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2 you about. Are you here just collecting
3 money. You're a part of our village.

4 So I just encourage everybody
5 in here to just to get in tune with
6 something that I heard the President say.
7 It's from the womb to college.

8 The President named the Mantua
9 community a promise zone destination, and
10 being the President of the Mantua Civic
11 Association, our number one priority is
12 education, and I hope that will be your
13 number one priority too.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you. Excellent testimony. Thank you for
17 all that you do in Mantua and your
18 leadership. Thank you.

19 Any questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you very much.

23 Ms. Winder.

24 MS. WINDER: Thank you very
25 much for the opportunity to present to

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2 you today.

3 The impact of high-quality
4 early education is undisputed and well
5 described by previous speakers here this
6 morning. In Philadelphia, the shortage
7 of high-quality early learning options
8 robs our children of the foundation they
9 need to achieve in school and adulthood.

10 James Heckman, the
11 Nobel-winning economist, found in 2000
12 that failure to provide low-income
13 children high-quality early learning
14 programs increases the cost of public
15 education and drives up social welfare,
16 policing, and correction costs, while it
17 depresses local tax revenues. Suffice to
18 say, our failure to give our children
19 this strong start is simply bad public
20 policy. In the information that was
21 handed to you, I've attached a recent
22 Business Week article summarizing
23 Dr. Heckman's research.

24 Last year's report on pre-K by
25 the Accountability Review Council of the

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2 School District of Philadelphia found
3 that children who enrolled in the
4 District having attended high-quality
5 pre-K were significantly more likely to
6 be prepared for kindergarten than their
7 peers without pre-K or with poorer
8 quality pre-K. Quality matters every bit
9 as much as access. You can also find the
10 Accountability Review Council reports
11 attached in the testimony.

12 Instead of spending time on the
13 legions of data to prove the benefit of
14 high-quality early learning programs, I'd
15 like to offer some suggestions on what
16 you can do to align public policy with
17 research and sound fiscal management of
18 the public's tax dollars. Here are our
19 top five recommendations.

20 One, we urge this committee and
21 every member of City Council to encourage
22 the School District to take a leadership
23 role in growing the pipeline of
24 high-quality early learning programs.
25 That does not necessarily mean the

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2 District should divert more funds to
3 creating slots in programs. Although if
4 affordable, that would be great.

5 But the District can and must
6 convene early learning centers and work
7 with providers to help increase
8 instructional quality to be more
9 inclusive of children with special needs
10 and to align their early learning
11 activities so that children are more
12 prepared for entering the District's
13 kindergarten classrooms. We urge you to
14 be relentless in asking the District
15 about its plan to improve their early
16 learning options for our children,
17 including efforts to boost the quality of
18 the programs it operates as well as those
19 by external providers.

20 Two, as powerful as early
21 learning is, it is not a lifetime
22 inoculation against school failure. That
23 same Accountability Review Council study
24 identified that by third grade,
25 social-emotional gains retained, but

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2 academic achievement gains fade. To
3 reverse that trend, the School District
4 must focus on how it sustains children's
5 learning games by improving the support
6 it gives to teachers in its K to three
7 classrooms. For this reason, we suggest
8 that Council discuss with the District
9 the possibility of creating a new Office
10 of Early Learning, staffed with an
11 experienced person who knows how to
12 manage and improve large systems. That
13 office could successfully be charged with
14 the responsibility for improving student
15 learning from pre-K to third grade. A
16 great way to demonstrate your support of
17 early learning and the need for the
18 District to take this bull by the horns
19 is to act swiftly to pass an ordinance to
20 transfer \$120 million from the current
21 sales tax collections to the School
22 District so the District can afford to do
23 this important work.

24 Three, last month four of our
25 region's most respected organizations

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2 announced they had joined forces with
3 other influential organizations across
4 the state to launch the Pre-K for PA
5 campaign. The campaign is working to
6 make pre-K a defining issue in the 2014
7 elections for all state offices,
8 including the Governor. The goal is to
9 have every candidate see the political
10 wisdom of adopting a formal campaign
11 commitment of enacting the state policies
12 necessary to ensure access for every
13 three- and four-year-old to high-quality
14 pre-K. This City Council can send a
15 powerful message to all candidates by
16 formally endorsing Pre-K for PA and
17 urging high-quality pre-K for
18 Pennsylvania's three- and four-year-olds
19 to be a firm commitment for all
20 candidates. I've attached to the
21 testimony a sample ordinance that if
22 passed would put you on record as an
23 early and strong supporter of this
24 effort.

25 Four, City Council acted

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2 decisively last year when it passed the
3 first city's investment in a grant
4 program to expand early learning
5 programs. Thank you for making this
6 \$500,000 available. It was an important
7 step in increasing access to high-quality
8 early learning. Today we urge you to
9 consider expanding your investment and
10 doing so in a manner that more
11 specifically ensures public funds are
12 used to grow the share of high-quality
13 programs in the City.

14 And, five, in addition to
15 looking to the state to fund the
16 expansion of sites in high-quality early
17 learning programs, City Council can take
18 decisive action to augment whatever we
19 can persuade the state to do. In 2012,
20 Mayor Julian Castro of San Antonio, Texas
21 persuaded the residents of his city to
22 increase the sales tax by one-eighth of a
23 cent to make high-quality pre-K available
24 to every four-year-old. San Francisco
25 Mayor Gavin Newsome directed nearly \$12

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2 million from his city's budget to expand
3 early learning programs. Just as the
4 K-12 education system requires dedicated
5 funding from federal, state, and local
6 resources, it is both prudent and
7 necessary for the City to be an investor
8 in building the early learning skills of
9 our future workforce.

10 We urge Council to hold a
11 special Committee of the Whole meeting
12 hosting representatives from other large
13 cities that are investing their local
14 resources in high-quality learning
15 programs so that we can learn about the
16 sources of their funds and what they've
17 learned about how to ensure these local
18 resources are best put to use.

19 It is undisputed that
20 high-quality early education is the
21 single most important variable in
22 narrowing the achievement gap and
23 assuring all the children succeed in
24 school. Succeeding in school has to
25 build on that good foundation or the

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2 achievement gap just gets wider, and we
3 all pay a very big price later on. While
4 many of our City Council persons are
5 deeply aware and concerned about this
6 early learning dilemma, our city has yet
7 to find the will to unite around policies
8 and priorities that will set us on a path
9 to reverse it from the next generation,
10 the generation born since 2010 on whom
11 our city's future rests, because these
12 children won't get a second chance. We
13 can start today with a new commitment to
14 them. We believe that these five
15 policies are modest and achievable. Some
16 of them can be achieved next month. All
17 of them can be implemented this year.
18 These are just the beginning.

19 Thank you again for your time.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you. Thank you very much. That's why
22 we're here, trying to do those things,
23 and I really respect and we've sent
24 letters out requesting an increase, but
25 of course, we'll have to define how we

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2 want to spend it. Thank you.

3 Questions?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All

6 right. Thank you very much.

7 Ms. Askins.

8 MS. ASKINS: Good afternoon.

9 When I prepared this testimony, I was to
10 speak in the morning, and that's a
11 testament to the fact that this has been
12 a real dialogue this morning. So I
13 commend you for holding the hearing, but
14 even more than just holding the hearing,
15 I commend you for the real conversation
16 that has gone on today.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you.

19 MS. ASKINS: I'm Jodi Askins
20 and I am the Executive Director of the
21 Pennsylvania Association for the
22 Education of Young Children. You have
23 heard the National Association for the
24 Education of Young Children referenced
25 several times today. We are the state

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2 affiliate of NAEYC.

3 NAEYC was founded in 1926 and,
4 since that time, has been one of the
5 leading voices in supporting high-quality
6 early care and education programs for
7 young children and their families. I'm
8 here today to talk to you about why
9 high-quality early care and education
10 should be considered a funding priority
11 for the City of Philadelphia.

12 You have heard time and time
13 again through testimony already this
14 morning and I'm sure as the course of
15 testimony goes on today that it is a
16 vital component to closing the
17 achievement gap producing qualified
18 workers, providing short- and long-term
19 economic returns to Philadelphia and
20 Pennsylvania taxpayers. We know this not
21 only from national research, but from
22 Pennsylvania-specific research as well.
23 It is the quality level that makes the
24 difference.

25 You heard about the 40 years of

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2 research from the Abecedarian and Perry
3 Preschool projects. I do want to restate
4 that that research shows that children
5 affected by risk factors such as poverty,
6 low education level of the mother, and
7 poorly performing schools can make
8 significant gains and overcome these
9 risks for failing in school when they
10 participate in quality early education.
11 Why is that so important here?

12 Philadelphia has the second highest risk
13 rating for young children of any county
14 in Pennsylvania, according to the 2012
15 Pennsylvania Office of Child Development
16 and Early Learning Region Risk Report.

17 The risk factors that are
18 contributing to this rating include 75.7
19 percent of children living in
20 economically at-risk families. Those are
21 families up to 300 percent of poverty.
22 So it's about a \$66,000 annual salary for
23 a family of four. And the 23.7 percent
24 of children born to mothers with less
25 than a high school education. In

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2 addition, 41.8 percent of third graders
3 in Philadelphia score below proficient on
4 the 2011 PSSA reading test. These are
5 exactly the risk factors that the 40
6 years of research showed a child could
7 overcome with participation in quality
8 early education.

9 In addition to the academic and
10 social gains, a cost analysis of
11 parent-child centers in Chicago 2002
12 demonstrated that every dollar invested
13 in quality early education -- and you've
14 heard this -- saves at least \$7 and up to
15 \$17 in public assistance costs,
16 corrections, and lost taxes. In
17 addition, in special education costs for
18 school districts.

19 Economist James Heckman states
20 the rate of return for the quality early
21 education is 10 percent of a year. What
22 does that mean? That means that an
23 \$8,000 investment in a child at birth is
24 nearly an \$800,000 return over that
25 child's life. That's very significant.

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2 Using Pennsylvania-specific
3 data, Timothy Bartik, Ph.D. and senior
4 economist, states for every dollar
5 Pennsylvania invests in early childhood
6 education, more than \$2 is circulated
7 immediately, an immediate benefit, into
8 the regional economy through employment,
9 purchasing goods and services.

10 Our high-quality programs are
11 not reaching enough of the most at-risk
12 children. Of the total 101,053 children
13 under five years of age in Philadelphia,
14 19 percent are served by those early care
15 and education providers striving to meet
16 quality standards through Keystone STARS,
17 but only 12 percent of those providers
18 that are in STARS are of the high quality
19 kind, STARS 3 and 4, and those are the
20 programs that reap these kinds of
21 benefits -- or the children reap these
22 kinds of benefits.

23 Keystone STARS, which has been
24 mentioned today, is Pennsylvania's
25 quality improvement rating system. It is

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2 nationally recognized and has moved
3 Pennsylvania over the last ten years from
4 one of nine states that did not put
5 public money into public pre-K. It has
6 made us nationally recognized with a
7 system that supports high-quality early
8 education.

9 The framework of this system
10 serves the diverse needs of families
11 while building confidence from business
12 and other community leaders. You heard
13 earlier that we really need to focus on
14 the community and not just those
15 providing the direct service.

16 The Keystone STARS framework
17 includes four important pieces: high
18 standards and expectations for program
19 quality based on research and experience
20 and focused on the best outcomes for
21 children; professional preparation and
22 ongoing education of teachers and
23 administrators delivering these programs;
24 accountability for results, and those
25 providing the services will tell you

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2 there are ways to measure outcomes and
3 they are asked to do it every day;
4 financial supports that are linked
5 directly and clearly to the standards.
6 Our providers do get financial incentives
7 while they are participating in Keystone
8 STARS.

9 Within this framework, there is
10 a focus on higher education and
11 specialized training for teachers in
12 early care and education programs.
13 Research has demonstrated the importance
14 of education and specialized training in
15 producing teacher behaviors consistent
16 with high-quality programming.
17 High-quality teachers lead to better
18 developmental outcomes for children.
19 Teacher behavior is one of the major
20 influences on child development. In
21 fact, research has found the single most
22 important determinant of quality
23 childcare is the presence of a
24 consistent, sensitive, well-trained and
25 well-compensated early care and education

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2 provider. Unfortunately, low wages and
3 the lack of benefits leads childcare
4 workers leaving the field because they
5 cannot afford to stay in it.

6 I cannot tell you how many
7 times I have had people call me and say
8 we have lost our best teacher to sheets.

9 Research shows that providers
10 with an education specific to early
11 childhood education and care are less
12 likely to leave their current position.
13 In 2000, National Research Council's
14 report Eager to Learn recommended a
15 minimum standard for teachers of three-
16 and four-year-olds as a four-year college
17 degree, with specialized training in
18 early childhood education.

19 However, studies have found
20 that in fact the majority of
21 professionals that make up the current
22 early childhood workforce are not
23 adequately prepared, and the vast
24 majority of classroom staff in
25 Philadelphia's childcare program does not

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2 have a two- or four-year degree in early
3 childhood education and is paid at wages
4 that lead to high turnover.

5 In Philadelphia as of December
6 2013, there are 1,931 registered or
7 certified childcare programs. These are
8 current centers and homes. Of those
9 programs, only 154 are STAR 3 or 4. This
10 is extremely significant. Again, only 12
11 percent of childcare programs have met
12 the standards that produce the academic,
13 social, and economic outcomes achieved
14 through high quality.

15 Why is this the case? Well,
16 there are many reasons, but meeting staff
17 qualifications is one of the biggest
18 challenges programs face in moving from
19 STAR 2 to STAR 3 and 4, and once those
20 qualifications are met, programs face
21 significant challenges in maintaining
22 salary levels that can retain those
23 highly qualified teachers. Quality costs
24 money.

25 Financing early childhood

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2 education is a vexing problem. Unlike
3 the K through 12 education system, most
4 early care and education services are
5 delivered by the private sector,
6 non-profit, faith-based, and for-profit
7 centers, as well as thousands of
8 home-based businesses.

9 The Commonwealth has made
10 significant investments in these
11 providers, and the result has been
12 steadily improving quality over the past
13 ten years. However, meeting Keystone
14 STARS quality standards and tapping the
15 multiple funding streams to support
16 high-quality services is a complex task.
17 In fact, although financial supports are
18 offered for participants in Keystone
19 STARS, cost studies completed in
20 Pennsylvania have shown that many
21 providers operating at the highest
22 quality levels often struggle just to
23 keep their doors open.

24 The bottom line is that
25 children only get one chance to attend

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2 high-quality early learning programs.
3 There are no do-overs. We cannot go back
4 in time for the children who do not have
5 access to high-quality experiences in
6 their early learning today or tomorrow.
7 And unfortunately the data shows that
8 there are far too many of these children
9 in Philadelphia.

10 It is true that Philadelphia,
11 like many cities around the country, does
12 not have enough money. I would argue,
13 however, that does not mean that the City
14 of Philadelphia does not have any money.
15 Budgeting is about priorities. And as I
16 stated in the beginning of my testimony,
17 high-quality early education should be
18 considered a funding priority for the
19 City of Philadelphia. I can't imagine
20 what the argument would be to keep the
21 children of Philadelphia from the top of
22 your priority list.

23 Thank you very much.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much.

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2 Are there any questions?

3 COUNCILMAN OH: I have a couple
4 of questions.

5 So I do appreciate your
6 testimony and particularly the statistics
7 you brought about high quality versus
8 poor quality. I have a question related
9 to summer learning, and it would apply
10 from early childhood education all the
11 way through. But some of the studies
12 that I have read -- in fact, quite
13 frankly, all of the studies I have
14 read -- that relate to high-quality
15 education and good performance, in
16 addition to the things you identified,
17 selecting from the upper third, high
18 compensation, appreciation and respect in
19 the field, autonomy in the classroom, all
20 those types of things, but in those
21 systems, another thing that they have
22 looked at is that even when in the U.S.
23 we are keeping pace with students in
24 high-performing school districts, that
25 once we get to summer, that they continue

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2 to look and our kids stop for about two
3 months, and by the time they get back to
4 school and every summer they seem to fall
5 further and further behind. And I know
6 we're talking specifically about early
7 education at this point in time, but have
8 you come across any studies like that,
9 for example?

10 MS. ASKINS: There's very
11 limited research that really looks at
12 those summer months. I will say what I
13 have seen in that regard is that there is
14 a difference. I can't tell you
15 specifically the amount of difference,
16 but for children who are exposed on some
17 regular basis over the summer months.

18 What Pennsylvania has tried to
19 do recently is institute a summer
20 program, and the qualifications of a
21 program meeting that -- to be able to
22 serve those kids and access that funding
23 was not specific, in that they didn't say
24 whether it needed to be once a week or
25 twice a week or crammed into two weeks.

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2 I would say the minimal
3 research says that if there is periodic
4 exposure over summer, that that is
5 beneficial to a child. But I agree with
6 you, we don't have enough studies that
7 have been conducted in order to really
8 say what the impact is and how
9 significant it is and how often that
10 exposure needs to occur.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. Thank
12 you very much. Thank you, everyone.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you very much.

15 We'd ask the Clerk to read the
16 next panel.

17 Thank you all very much for
18 your testimony.

19 THE CLERK: Ms. Suzann Morris,
20 Assistant Director of Public Policy,
21 Delaware Valley Association for the
22 Education of Young Children; Ms. Sharon
23 Neilson, Co-Chair, Philadelphia for Early
24 Childhood Education; Ms. Dolores Shaw,
25 Co-Chair, Philadelphia for Early

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2 Childhood Education; and Ms. Farrah
3 Parkes, Director, Targeted Solutions,
4 Public Health Management Corporation.

5 (Witnesses approached witness
6 table.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
8 afternoon. Thank you for your patience.
9 Feel free to begin your testimony.

10 MS. MORRIS: Good afternoon.
11 I'm Suzann Morris. I'm with DVAEYC, and
12 I'd just like to apologize on behalf of
13 our Executive Director, Sharon
14 Easterling. She wanted to join us here
15 today, but was called away on a family
16 emergency.

17 Thank you to the Committee
18 members and especially Councilwoman
19 Blackwell for calling this important
20 ability to testify. We really appreciate
21 your time and effort and, most
22 importantly, your listening ear and
23 dialogue.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you.

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2 MS. MORRIS: On behalf of the
3 Board of Directors for the Delaware
4 Valley Association for the Education of
5 Young Children, I want to speak to you
6 today about the need and wisdom for the
7 City of Philadelphia to make strategic
8 and significant investments in early
9 childhood education, most significantly
10 in quality.

11 More than 40 years of research,
12 as you have heard today, has demonstrated
13 the life-changing benefits of
14 high-quality early childhood education,
15 particularly for children facing multiple
16 risk factors that diminish their
17 opportunities.

18 We have learned from national
19 studies that high-quality early childhood
20 education programs double the rates of
21 high school graduation and cut rates of
22 teen pregnancy and incarceration in half.
23 We have learned from our own Pennsylvania
24 Pre-K Counts program here in Philadelphia
25 that children who participate in

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2 high-quality preschool programs have
3 significantly lower rates of special
4 education placement, dropping all the way
5 from 14 percent of placement with no
6 access to Pre-K Counts to 4 percent. And
7 while we know that children who start
8 behind most often stay behind, quality
9 early childhood education is the most
10 effective intervention for reducing the
11 achievement gap that we hear about so
12 much in our nation.

13 It is noteworthy that the
14 latest effort to improve educational
15 outcomes for children in Philadelphia is
16 focused on third grade reading scores.
17 We must do a better job of connecting the
18 dots, and clearly there's a strong
19 correlation between third grade reading
20 skills and future academic success,
21 including high school graduation, which
22 we know is so important to our city.

23 But we must also connect the
24 dots that lead to low third grade reading
25 scores, and that is emphatically the

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2 issue of school readiness. The vast
3 majority of young children in
4 Philadelphia are spending their formative
5 years outside their homes being cared for
6 by adults with no training in child
7 development and little, if any,
8 understanding of how to support early
9 learning.

10 Unregulated childcare and
11 low-quality childcare settings represent
12 an enormous missed opportunity for the
13 City. For if every one of those early
14 care settings was transformed to
15 high-quality developmentally appropriate
16 experience, we could literally change the
17 future for most of our city's children.

18 While there are myriad examples
19 of an early childhood education strategy
20 that is effective, I would cite one
21 compelling example today. In Union City,
22 New Jersey, our neighbors just over to
23 the east, where a majority of residents
24 are second language English learners and
25 two-thirds of children live in poverty,

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2 the high school graduation rate is over
3 89 percent. Students are being recruited
4 by Ivy League colleges and universities.

5 Union City achieved these
6 remarkable results by guaranteeing a
7 high-quality early childhood education
8 slot for every preschooler in Union City
9 and aligning this strategy with their
10 school reform efforts, the K through 12
11 system. Simply stated, our most vigorous
12 efforts to fix ailing schools cannot
13 succeed without a substantial investment
14 in early childhood education. It is
15 deeply aligned.

16 For too long, city governments
17 have shunned any role in funding early
18 childhood education, asserting that it is
19 the responsibility of state and federal
20 government. However, understanding the
21 enormous benefit that accrues when
22 children come to school ready to succeed,
23 many cities are directly now supporting
24 high-quality early learning programs.
25 And I'm just going to give a few brief

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2 examples of what cities are doing across
3 the nation, and you heard a few from
4 previous speakers today.

5 San Francisco and Seattle are
6 raising additional tax revenue to fund
7 pre-K for at-risk children and
8 initiatives to improve the quality of
9 early childhood programs in each city.

10 Chicago dedicates revenue from
11 traffic cameras installed near parks and
12 schools and has allocated \$36 million
13 over three years to support pre-K for
14 three- and four-year-olds.

15 And Salt Lake City is financing
16 pre-K services through something called
17 Social Impact Funds, an innovative
18 strategy that leverages future savings in
19 special education costs to pay for
20 high-quality early education now.

21 There's a growing momentum at
22 the federal and state levels that we're
23 all hearing about to fund high-quality
24 pre-K services for young children. The
25 time has come for the City of

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2 Philadelphia to play a role in this
3 critical work by mapping out a strategy
4 to begin investing in high-quality early
5 education. Every year we delay is
6 another year we send a class of
7 five-year-olds to kindergarten without
8 the skills they need to succeed.

9 I urge you in the strongest
10 terms possible to truly make this a
11 priority, not just in words but in
12 action, by investing the resources to
13 ensure that every child has access to
14 high-quality early learning settings.
15 Their future depends on it and, quite
16 frankly, our future does as well.

17 It's the recommendation of
18 DVAEYC as well as our colleagues at
19 Philadelphians for Early Childhood
20 Education, PECE, that the Council support
21 the formation of a public-private
22 commission to investigate further how the
23 City can further support quality early
24 learning for all children. I ask
25 Councilmembers present today if you would

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2 support this initiative and if you have
3 any questions.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much.

7 The Chair acknowledges that
8 Councilman Brian O'Neill is here and we
9 thank him for being present.

10 Questions?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you very much.

14 Ms. Neilson.

15 MS. NEILSON: Good afternoon.

16 My name is Sharon Neilson and I am the
17 Director of Woodland Academy Child Care
18 Learning Development Center located in
19 Southwest Philadelphia and I'm also the
20 Co-Chair of Philadelphia for Early
21 Childhood Education.

22 Who is PECE and what is our
23 mission? In March of 2013, the School
24 District of Philadelphia decided to
25 outsource some 2,000 Head Start slots to

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2 community-based early learning facilities
3 at a savings of \$8 million, mostly due in
4 part with layoff of teachers. The
5 financial crisis facing the District was
6 and is of such dire extreme proportions
7 that all measures to save money were
8 being considered.

9 Considering what this meant in
10 terms of overloading an already fragile
11 early learning system -- and what I mean
12 early learning system, I mean as a STAR 4
13 center located in Southwest Philadelphia,
14 the standards for meeting a STAR 4, the
15 cost of reimbursement that we get from
16 the grant does not pay for meeting those
17 standards, and also the subsidized rate
18 that we get for the 99 percent of our
19 population, our clients, do not capture
20 the true cost of care. So this morning
21 when I got to work at 6 o'clock, I had to
22 fix a toilet that was leaking. I had to
23 answer the phone. I had to buzz staff
24 in. I had to set up a classroom for
25 classes that my staff was taking, and

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2 unsuccessfully tried to fix a table. I
3 had to update new staff when they came in
4 about what the day was going to look
5 like. I had to talk to parents. I had
6 to talk to staff. I had to talk to
7 children. I had to make sure that the
8 staffing and the child ratios was intact,
9 and then I had to make a doohickey thing
10 to carry these boards here to demonstrate
11 the children who left us, and then get
12 here. And that's just three hours from
13 this morning. So it's a very fragile
14 system, and anything or a lot of things
15 can cause it to tip in a way that causes
16 you to have to readjust things.

17 So the advocates, including
18 Delaware Valley Association for the
19 Education of Young Children, also
20 Childspace Cooperative Daycare Inc.,
21 providers like Kinder Canopy and myself,
22 parents, grandparents and other concerned
23 individuals came together and
24 experienced, organized, and committee
25 leaders saw this as an opportunity to

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2 shine a light on the critical need for
3 early childhood education to be funded.

4 Philadelphia for Early
5 Childhood Education was born to develop
6 the following mission: PECE is a
7 collaboration of parents, grandparents,
8 teachers, providers, and advocacy groups.
9 Our purpose is to organize the community
10 to work with public institutions to
11 increase resources for quality early
12 childhood education for all of
13 Philadelphia's children.

14 Our accomplishments: PECE
15 uncovered an important need for
16 non-profit providers to have funds for
17 physical expansion in order to accept in
18 new children no longer attaining early
19 learning education in the Philadelphia
20 school system. Through public education,
21 PECE brought this to the attention of
22 Councilwoman Blondell Brown, Jannie
23 Blackwell, and Maria Quinones-Sanchez.
24 Together with City Council, PECE
25 developed an idea of a \$500,000

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2 allocation to the Facilities Fund. This
3 fund had been established to help early
4 childhood providers with resources for
5 capital projects.

6 In partnership with the Office
7 of Housing and Development and
8 Philadelphia Health Management
9 Corporation, the Facilities Fund has been
10 in process of distributing much-needed
11 grants to both for-profit and non-profit
12 providers. We have found that the need
13 for these funds have far outweighed
14 available resources. Our concern is
15 further outsourcing of ECE slots will
16 create larger need for an expansion of
17 the scope of resources that this fund can
18 be used for and an increase in the amount
19 of funds available in the Facilities
20 Fund.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you very much. Sorry you had to do so
23 much. Thank you very much.

24 Ms. Shaw.

25 MS. SHAW: Good afternoon and,

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2 once again, PECE would like to thank all
3 of the Councilwomen and men that have
4 worked hard to put together this hearing.
5 My name is Dolores Shaw. I'm a mother of
6 three adult children and the grandmother
7 of three adult children. All my adult
8 children had the benefits of attending
9 preschool early childhood education
10 growing up, and I was an active parent
11 volunteer at all the centers.

12 The reports that you have in
13 your hands today is a conglomeration of
14 data that PECE and DVAEYC have put
15 together to show the lack of high-quality
16 early childhood education centers across
17 Philadelphia, and they're broke down by
18 councilmanic district, so any particular
19 Councilperson can see that across the
20 City, there is limited resources, but in
21 individual areas, that even grows even
22 larger, because depending on what your
23 councilmanic district is, there are even
24 less spots than what are normally
25 available.

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2 Looking at the data, only about
3 12 percent of our children are receiving
4 quality early childhood education that
5 can adequately prepare our young people
6 for success. All the research, as it's
7 been talked about extensively here today,
8 all the research indicates that if we do
9 not give our children this important
10 start, that we are depriving them of
11 doing well throughout their time in
12 school and in their future lives.

13 The need is clear. Federal and
14 state officials have identified quality
15 early childhood education, and cities
16 across the country are developing
17 strategies to address this urgent
18 challenge, as Suzann mentioned a minute
19 ago. Philadelphia School District leader
20 Dr. William Hite has set the bar high in
21 his new program for Philadelphia schools,
22 looking for all of our children to be
23 learning at grade level by eight years
24 old. And this is a very high bar, but we
25 need to be clear. We cannot get there

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2 unless our city is in partnership with
3 state and federal officials that provide
4 the necessary resources to support
5 quality early childhood education.

6 To make it a little bit more
7 personal and to also talk about the need
8 in my own community, I became involved in
9 PECE last year when I was working with my
10 daughter to try to find an early
11 childhood education spot for my
12 four-year-old grandson, and it quickly
13 became clear that there were really very
14 limited resources in my 19140 area code.
15 Like many young parents with limited
16 resources, one of the biggest challenges
17 was one of transportation. With a
18 household that had limited resources,
19 since nobody right now is working, we did
20 not have the funds available to move
21 outside my own community to take my
22 grandson to a high-quality ECE center.

23 Even more importantly, as a
24 former parent leader and an organizer
25 with the Eastern Philadelphia Organizer

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2 Project, one of the things I tried to do
3 is to talk to parents in my community
4 about some of the challenges they were
5 meeting as they tried to find early
6 childhood education for their own
7 children, and they were across the board
8 very different. I talked to parents who
9 had some of the same transportation
10 issues I had. I talked to parents who
11 were also challenged by issues of safety.
12 And not only safety in some of the ECE
13 centers, but safety around centers. As
14 you well know, there was a recent
15 shooting, I believe, in West Oak Lane
16 where a parent was shot outside an early
17 childhood education center. And we're
18 not saying that this happens all the
19 time, but if it's your child that you're
20 taking in and out of a community that you
21 feel unsafe, that makes you kind of weigh
22 what you need to do in order for your own
23 child.

24 Also, as always, there are
25 issues of cultural diversity. I live in

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2 a Latino community where Latino parents
3 always are aware of making sure that
4 their children get the best of a cultural
5 heritage that is very important to them.
6 This is also true of African American
7 communities, who have a long history
8 where grandparents have always been
9 caregivers for children. Fortunately,
10 we're moving forward, where parents and
11 grandparents are seeing the benefit of
12 sending their children to early childhood
13 education centers.

14 Seeing the benefits is very
15 critical to meeting the needs, though.
16 We have to create more slots for these
17 parents, grandparents, foster parents,
18 and parents who are trying to find ways
19 to get their children into early
20 childhood education.

21 To that end, as it's been said
22 earlier today, we call upon the City to
23 continue to support and increase
24 resources for the Facilities Fund that
25 was started and restarted last year.

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2 PECE is suggesting that a public-private
3 commission is established to explore
4 strategies to increase quality early
5 childhood education for all
6 Philadelphia's children.

7 Philadelphia -- and I'd like to
8 make this clear. As the President talked
9 about last year when he made it part of
10 his State of the Union message last year
11 and again this year, early childhood
12 education has to continue to be the
13 foothold of changing public education
14 across the board. Philadelphia has an
15 opportunity to come up to the bat and be
16 at the forefront of changing what early
17 childhood education looks like across the
18 nation, and we can begin this by
19 providing more early childhood education
20 for all of Philadelphia children. And I
21 make this testimony for my grandson,
22 Adrian, who is home today with his
23 mother. There are lots of Adrians out
24 there, lots of parents who are waiting
25 for the opportunity for their children to

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2 receive the benefit of an early childhood
3 education.

4 Once again, I thank you, and I
5 hope that if you have any questions,
6 you'll direct them toward PECE.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much.

9 Any questions?

10 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
12 afternoon, ladies. Thank you for your
13 testimony and commitment to early
14 childhood education.

15 So I'd like to raise the same
16 question with you that I raised with
17 other panelists. In your view, what do
18 you believe excellence looks like for
19 little people, or how do we convey
20 excellence to little people?

21 MS. MORRIS: Well, I'm a parent
22 as well, so I wear two hats. I'm a
23 fairly new parent, and I've actually
24 struggled to find care for my infant
25 that's close to my work. I work here in

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2 Center City. Because the wait lists are
3 so significantly long.

4 But what I was looking for in a
5 center and continue to look for in the
6 centers that I'm on wait lists for are
7 the relationships with accredited
8 teachers that have not only a deep
9 knowledge and understanding of how
10 infants and toddlers develop, but an
11 accessible patience and a love for
12 children, but also a living wage that
13 allows them to stay at their particular
14 program, because what I'm not looking for
15 is disruption in my child's life. I
16 would really like -- his name is Clyde --
17 to be able to develop deep relationships
18 with all the people that touch his life.
19 And so I'm deeply aware of understanding
20 what it means to really have to sacrifice
21 for your job because I work with so many
22 early childhood providers in my
23 profession, but then on the other end, I
24 experience that as I'm looking for a
25 high-quality setting for Clyde really

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2 knowing that a lot of these men and women
3 are sacrificing every day just to be able
4 to be in the classroom, and that is not
5 fair. We don't want our teachers
6 sacrificing to provide quality. We want
7 them to have a living wage and to be able
8 to be sustained.

9 So that's what I'm looking for,
10 as well as safe and healthy and
11 wonderfully engaging settings.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Of course.
13 The fundamental requirements, yes.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. NEILSON: So if I could
16 just answer your question, when I look at
17 the center that I am working and then I
18 look at excellence, how I see excellence
19 in children is their willingness to find
20 the answers, to seek out the questions
21 and to come up with their own research or
22 come up with their own interesting take
23 on things. Also, their willingness to
24 work with their peers. So their
25 social-emotional skills, if they can work

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2 with a group, if they can handle the
3 stress of just being their individual
4 self, their ability to grasp what is
5 being said or what is being taught to
6 them and to relate it into their own
7 lives and how they make those connections
8 to what it is that they've been taught or
9 whatever it is that they have been
10 introduced to, how they take that
11 information and just take it throughout
12 their day and take it into their learning
13 and expand on it and grow, and you can
14 kind of see how they're developing their
15 thoughts and how they're coming to own
16 that information that you have either
17 shared with them or the information that
18 they have gleaned by themselves.
19 Sometimes children teach us --

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Oh, for
21 sure.

22 MS. NEILSON: -- in the way
23 that they go about doing things and just
24 shed light on different ways to solve a
25 problem. So the sense of community that

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2 they have to education.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

4 MS. SHAW: And if I can make
5 one further comment. I deferred to both
6 Suzann and to Sharon because I know
7 they've been sitting here a long time and
8 Sharon has to go back to Woodland and
9 Suzann has to go back to her duties at
10 DVAEYC.

11 As an experienced parent and as
12 an experienced grandparent, one of the
13 things I find, as I explained to my
14 daughter the things that she needs to
15 look for, are some of the same things I
16 looked for when the kids were going to
17 public school at K through 12. Like I
18 said, you're looking for experience,
19 high-quality teachers for your preschool
20 children the same way you look for them
21 for your own children. And you're
22 looking for, like I said, the numbers,
23 the ratio to be so that each child will
24 get all the essential qualities of that
25 education that they need.

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2 Also, as always, parent
3 involvement, parent engagement, engaging
4 parents in every aspect of their child's
5 preschool education continues to be at
6 the forefront of this, as it was stated
7 again here today.

8 So those are some of the
9 qualities that we look for. That's what
10 we try to engage our parents in and try
11 to talk to them as they're looking for
12 and listening to them about their issues
13 as they try to prepare to put their own
14 kids into preschool.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

16 Thank you.

17 Thank you, Madam Chair.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you.

20 Any other questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
23 thank this panel, and we have one more
24 panel left and we ask the Clerk -- I
25 didn't call on Farrah Parkes? I

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2 apologize.

3 MS. PARKES: It's okay.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you.

6 MS. PARKES: I'll keep it
7 quick.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're
9 fine.

10 MS. PARKES: Good afternoon.
11 My name is Farrah Parkes. I'm a Senior
12 Director at Public Health Management
13 Corporation, also known as PHMC. PHMC is
14 the non-profit agency that's working with
15 OHCD to administer the funds that City
16 Council allocated last year to help
17 childcare providers improve their
18 facilities. I'm here to provide an
19 update on how the funds are being used.

20 PHMC worked with PECE and with
21 OHCD to develop eligibility criteria.
22 Eligibility for funding was limited to
23 STAR 3 and 4 providers as well as any
24 providers that had taken on new Head
25 Start slots from the School District. We

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2 developed a scoring rubric, which gave
3 higher priority to sites that served more
4 children on subsidy, were STAR 4, and had
5 not previously received similar funding
6 through the old Childcare Facilities
7 Fund. We also established maximum
8 funding amounts of \$25,000 for centers,
9 \$10,000 for groups, and \$5,000 for family
10 providers.

11 During the one-month
12 application period between November and
13 December of last year, we received
14 requests from 76 providers, 68 centers,
15 11 family, and one group provider.

16 Almost all the providers asked
17 for help with multiple facility issues,
18 mostly basic repairs and projects to
19 improve the health and safety of their
20 facilities or to improve quality.

21 Fifty percent of sites
22 requested assistance with replacing or
23 repairing flooring; 40 percent requested
24 assistance with adding, replacing or
25 repairing walls; 33 percent requested

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2 assistance with outdoor play areas; 27
3 percent needed help adding or repairing
4 bathrooms; a similar percentage needed
5 systems to improve safety or security;
6 and 10 to 20 percent requested assistance
7 with repairing roofs, ceilings, replacing
8 windows, replacing HVAC systems or large
9 appliances, repainting or installing
10 sinks in classrooms. Other requests
11 included lighting improvements, repair or
12 replacement of doors, and plumbing
13 issues.

14 Based on the volume of requests
15 and the funds available, less than half
16 of these providers that applied will be
17 funded. Requests are being processed on
18 a first-come, first-served basis, and
19 OHCD is currently working on projects for
20 23 providers: 12 centers, 10 family, and
21 one group.

22 Even these 23 providers will
23 not have all their needs met since in
24 almost all cases the total cost of their
25 requests exceed the \$25,000 maximum.

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2 Some providers are contributing
3 additional funds of their own if they
4 have them, but even so, not all the work
5 needed will be done. We have worked with
6 providers to identify the highest
7 priority items, and these will be
8 addressed first. Their requests, those
9 being funded, are similar to those of
10 other applicants. Almost half need their
11 floors repaired or replaced; a quarter
12 need their outdoor play areas upgraded
13 for safety; 17 percent need their roofs
14 repaired or replaced; the same percentage
15 need painting, bathroom repairs or
16 installation, and safety and security
17 systems. Other projects again include
18 lighting, HVAC, and plumbing.

19 We will continue to fund
20 additional providers until funds are
21 fully expended, but based on the
22 available funding, we expect that only an
23 additional three to four sites will be
24 funded, bringing the total number of
25 sites to under 30, which is less than 40

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2 percent of those that applied.

3 If you have any questions, I'd
4 be happy to try to answer them. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you very much.

8 Any questions?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you very much. Thank you, Ms. Parkes. I
12 apologize again.

13 Will the Clerk read those from
14 the --

15 MS. SHAW: We have one more.
16 We have a parent that wishes to speak,
17 Ms. Sophia Poe.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: As
19 they say, as old folks say, take your
20 time and hurry up.

21 (Witness approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you. No; welcome. Seriously, welcome.
25 Please identify yourself.

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2 MS. POE: Hi. My name is
3 Sophia Poe.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Say
5 that again.

6 MS. POE: Sophia Poe.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: P-O-E?

8 MS. POE: P-O-E.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 for. Welcome.

11 MS. POE: Thank you. Thanks
12 for having me.

13 I guess I'll speak a little bit
14 about my experience. In 2002, I found
15 myself to be a teen parent, and I was
16 looking for quality centers and I
17 stumbled upon a great place called
18 Women's Christian Alliance, and I
19 actually was given a job opportunity
20 there as well. And being there, I
21 learned so much about the importance of a
22 quality early childhood center. I
23 learned about my son and how important
24 those early years were. And being a teen
25 parent, I was completely terrified. I

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2 wanted to be the best parent possible,
3 but I wasn't sure how to go about it.
4 And just by enrolling my child into this
5 program, I learned so much about him as
6 well as myself. So without this program,
7 I'm not sure where I would be
8 career-wise.

9 Now I work closely with
10 families in communities. I get a chance
11 to engage parents that's going through
12 homelessness or that want to go back to
13 school and get a GED or just advance
14 their life to show their children that
15 education is important. So through that
16 program, I gained leadership skills, and
17 to this day, I can see how early
18 childhood education impacts my child's
19 life. He's still close friends with the
20 friends that he had in preschool, and
21 he's in close contact with those teachers
22 that inspired him to learn. In school
23 his teachers just say, you know, he asks
24 the most inquisitive questions. He's
25 always searching for learning, searching

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2 for those experience, and he really takes
3 ownership when it comes to learning.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
5 wonderful. How old is he?

6 MS. POE: He is 11 years old
7 now.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You
9 look about 12.

10 MS. POE: Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
12 wonderful. What a wonderful testimony.

13 Questions?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you again, Ms. Poe.

17 MS. POE: Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you.

20 Clerk, read the names of the
21 final panel.

22 THE CLERK: Ms. Leina Santiago,
23 parent, Woodland Academy; Ms. Wadeeah
24 Stokes, parent, Woodland Academy;
25 Ms. Fatima Hasan, Director and Owner of

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2 Places and Spaces for Growth Learning
3 Center; and Mr. Orlando Acosta, Respect
4 Our Vote Movement Group.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you. If there is someone else who would
7 like to testify after this final panel,
8 please see the Clerk to the side and
9 he'll put your name down and we'll add
10 you on.

11 MS. SHAW: My apologies to
12 Council. Ms. Stokes and the other
13 Woodland Academy parent were not able to
14 make it here today due to at-home
15 emergencies. My apologies.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you. Not at all. Thank you for letting
18 us know.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So
22 Ms. Hasan and Mr. Orlando Acosta, you
23 will close us out, and then we're going
24 to ask the Clerk to read at the end of
25 the resolution, there's a poem. We want

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2 you to read that before we recess.

3 Good afternoon. Thank you for
4 your patience. Welcome.

5 MS. HASAN: Not a problem. I'm
6 happy to be here today. My name is
7 Fatima Hasan. I'm an Owner and Director
8 of a small childcare center in the
9 Overbrook section of Philadelphia. The
10 name of my center is Places and Spaces
11 for Growth Learning Center. I provided
12 care for parents that live, work or go to
13 school in the Overbrook area for the last
14 16 years. I've had the opportunity to
15 care for children from single mothers who
16 may be in school striving to provide a
17 better life for their families, for
18 parents who may just be getting into the
19 workforce for the first time, as well as
20 for parents who are professionals such as
21 teachers, doctors, and lawyers.

22 The one thing that they all
23 have in common to me is that they all
24 want the best for their children. They
25 want to drop them off feeling secure and

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2 that they're picked up -- and when they
3 come to pick them up in the afternoon,
4 they want to feel confident that they had
5 an eventful day and they enjoyed their
6 day.

7 I take my job very seriously
8 and I'm passionate about what I do. For
9 me, childcare is not just a job. It's an
10 obligation. And parents are sending
11 their children to us with the confidence
12 that we are going to nurture their babies
13 as well as prepare their preschoolers,
14 not just for kindergarten, but for as
15 life-long learners.

16 I also today brought a clip or
17 a PowerPoint of my childcare center and
18 just an overview of what a quality center
19 looks like from my perspective.

20 I'm not a person that's really
21 into a lot of words. I'm like more of an
22 artist creative type of person, so I like
23 to talk through pictures. And as though
24 we are teaching children who have all
25 kinds of backgrounds and who are aspiring

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2 to be all type of people, we want to make
3 sure that we are providing them the best
4 that we can and making sure that all the
5 children needs are met.

6 As an early childcare provider,
7 my center is also part of the Keystone
8 STARS. I've acquired three stars, and it
9 hasn't been an easy task. Once you begin
10 to go up in the STAR level, it becomes
11 more and more expensive, and the
12 support -- we get support, we get the
13 grants from the state, we get the grants
14 from the Keystone STARS. However, it's
15 still not enough. We are still falling
16 short for what we need to run our centers
17 and to keep the high quality going.

18 I was happy to hear that we had
19 the ECE fund this year, and I applied,
20 and I was one of the ones that wasn't
21 approved. I'm on the waiting list. But
22 I saw it as a great opportunity to better
23 my program and make the program -- get my
24 building in order, because other things
25 still need to happen.

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2 What quality early childhood
3 programs look like. This is just a skit.
4 This is just the children, they're
5 playing. As you can see, they're like
6 digging out a pumpkin and they're very
7 involved in it and they got their hands
8 all stuck in there and they're pulling
9 out the guts of it. It's a pumpkin that
10 we picked maybe on a pumpkin patch or
11 something like that. But the whole idea
12 is to keep the children engaged and to
13 allow them to not only learn by seeing,
14 but learn by doing, learn by getting
15 involved.

16 For example, if you look at the
17 picture, you may see the children just
18 discovering a pumpkin, but with this
19 activity, it actually may encourage one
20 of them to become a chef or to become a
21 scientist, because we realize with all of
22 these experiences that they have are
23 going to affect them for the rest of
24 their lives.

25 This right here is a picture of

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2 a child who is creating some art, and to
3 you he might just be painting a picture
4 or he might just be playing with some
5 Play-Doh, whatever he's doing, but to us
6 he's learning his colors, he's learning
7 his shapes, he's using his sensories to
8 feel. He's acquiring a lot of
9 information through what he's doing. And
10 who knows, he might even end up as our
11 next famous artist.

12 Yes, they get tired too and
13 they find interesting places to doze.
14 And the one thing that I really like
15 about my childcare center is because it's
16 small, it is very close knit, and it's
17 like a family feeling. So the children
18 are very comfortable there, which I think
19 throughout the day if I was leaving my
20 child some place for eight to ten hours,
21 I would want them to feel like they're at
22 home. So that's what this center really
23 makes them feel like.

24 So this is like a look at what
25 a high-quality program needs to carry.

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2 It's two marks of distinction. It
3 recognizes an excellent learning
4 environment for children, like from NAEYC
5 and getting the support from the Keystone
6 STARS to identify the type of environment
7 and activities that are necessary to
8 promote the children's optimum growth.
9 Without your program having this at the
10 core of their center, basically you
11 really won't know if you're doing high
12 quality, because no one is quantifying
13 it. By us having them come in and
14 quantify a program, we feel with
15 confidence and we know with confidence
16 that we're providing the children a
17 quality education. And not only that, it
18 recognizes the support of work and the
19 environment that the adults caring for
20 educating the children. We also get the
21 support from the Keystone STARS. We also
22 get the support from other groups like
23 CDI or DVAEYC that help support small
24 centers.

25 Keystone STAR uses the early

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2 childhood environmental rating, ERS, to
3 score the childcare facilities in the
4 areas of provision for the personal needs
5 of staff, staff interactions and
6 cooperation, supervision and evaluation
7 of staff, and opportunities for
8 professional growth. These instruments
9 that they use and that we use in our
10 classrooms are very detailed and,
11 therefore, we really have to be on every
12 aspect of our program, starting with
13 health and safety.

14 Quality programs need support.
15 A quality program needs other components
16 to maintain quality, provide resources
17 and support one another. And, once
18 again, we get this with Keystone STARS,
19 DVAEYC and, of course, Childcare
20 Cooperative Development -- Childspace
21 Cooperative Development.

22 Now we move on to the aspect of
23 a job or a staff and what we look for,
24 what we expect for a good job. Some of
25 the things are public salary scale for

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2 all positions, professional development
3 opportunities, health and safety
4 provisions for adults and children, a
5 staff lounge with restroom and resource
6 room, staff-child ratios and group sizes,
7 job descriptions, and evaluations. Now,
8 in a STAR of 3 or STAR of 4 center,
9 you're going to find these things in
10 place and they're going to be existing,
11 making it a better place for people to
12 work. But in a center that has less than
13 STARS, they may not have any of these
14 things. So it's just a job that people
15 go to every day and not a profession.

16 And, as you know, job qualities
17 are important. As teachers begin to
18 educate themselves and go back to school
19 and get degrees, usually when they come
20 back to a center, especially a size like
21 mine, they've outgrown it. The money
22 that they need and the money -- the
23 salary that they desiring, I can't afford
24 to pay. So usually I lose these
25 teachers, I lose these staff to like a

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2 larger center or to the School District
3 or something like that, making it
4 difficult for me to really maintain and
5 keep good staff.

6 Of course, family and community
7 engagement are important. When families
8 are involved in early childhood
9 education, it enriches the child's
10 experience as well as keep parents and
11 staff communicating. And this right here
12 is like one of my neighbors. We're able
13 to go and use her pond, so the children
14 go around there and feed her fish. They
15 may take a snack with them. And we have
16 a lot of opportunities to do things
17 within the communities.

18 Let's think and discuss this.
19 In order for quality programs to exist,
20 we need support, mainly money. So as an
21 early childcare provider, I'm asking you
22 to please continue with the ECE fund and
23 actually raise the ECE fund so that we
24 have more funding for programs like mine
25 and other programs that are offering

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2 high-quality care.

3 Let's go back and get started.

4 MR. ACOSTA: That was real
5 good.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you very much. We appreciate your
8 testimony.

9 Mr. Acosta.

10 MR. ACOSTA: Okay. Now I'm
11 going to close it out. Thank you very
12 much. Thank you, Councilwoman Jannie
13 Blackwell, for having this testimony.
14 She always comes out to the community and
15 shows the importance of what education
16 truly means to everyone.

17 Basically, I mean, what else
18 can be said about early childhood
19 education? Early childhood education
20 basically keeps a person from being in
21 prison later on in life as far as the
22 adulthood up into the teenage years and
23 different things of that sort. But then
24 again, due to the fact of our urban
25 communities being lack of funding. When

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2 it comes down to education from early
3 education to high school or anything
4 else, then that is going to be the
5 fundamental gap to success for all
6 children regardless of whether there's
7 early education or high school or
8 college.

9 But centers as far as like this
10 woman, the smaller centers have a much
11 more stronger knit with the community and
12 have a much more support system within
13 the community and should be looked at as
14 far as bringing more of them into larger
15 venues, because they have more input
16 within the community itself. And the
17 problem is when it comes down to,
18 quote/unquote, the School District, the
19 School District by them being in the \$400
20 million financial gap, then they're
21 lacking the resources again to give the
22 quality education for children from Head
23 Start on up to high school or middle
24 school. So there really has to be a
25 fundamental change of how it's brought in

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2 from the School District in that regard.

3 So I think that basically when
4 you look at the fact of the School
5 District doing everything that they can
6 as far as keeping the public school
7 system in strong regard, you also have to
8 look at can they fundamentally still,
9 without people such as this young lady
10 with her center, be able to give the
11 quality education that, you know, that
12 the children need in that regard.

13 So we need more support systems
14 within the community itself financially,
15 as well as if it's going to still be
16 fundamentally looked at from the School
17 District's point of view, then an
18 oversight still has to be put in place to
19 make sure that the money that they
20 receive is going to the children's
21 necessary services, whatever them
22 services within the programs really need
23 to have there for them to gain success.
24 And until that's been looked at as far
25 as, you know, bringing the economic gap

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2 together and the cultural aspect of --
3 because if they have -- and I'm not
4 knocking any teachers at all. What I'm
5 saying is just like if you have an
6 African American child, sometimes you
7 want to see that African American teacher
8 in front of that child so they can learn
9 their culture from someone of their
10 ethnic background, you know, and
11 different things of that sort. So in
12 that regard, you know, everyone needs
13 their own cultural background as far as
14 in the learning process to really gain
15 knowledge of their history and everything
16 of that sort.

17 So, you know, we really need to
18 strengthen what are Head Start system
19 really looks like, and it really --
20 education in general needs to be given
21 more funds and resources and put to the
22 top of the list.

23 The problem that I see is that
24 education is always put at the bottom,
25 and this is why that we're always

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2 fighting to reach the top and be number
3 one in the country and in the nation, you
4 know. And where I look at, if I was on
5 the other side of the spectrum, would be
6 that for me, that without education you
7 can't have any success whatsoever in
8 anything you do in life. So education
9 should always be the fundamental
10 component to anything overriding anything
11 else, because everything else falls into
12 place after a child reaches success from
13 Head Start all the way to college.

14 So until we fundamentally as
15 citizens, politicians really look at and
16 put education at the forefront, we're
17 always going to be lacking on, you know,
18 success in the educational field. So, I
19 mean, we got to fundamentally change our
20 way of thinking, the way that we do
21 things, and sometimes stop this
22 grandstanding that all of us do at some
23 point, you know, no matter who we are,
24 because at the end of the day, it's about
25 these children. And these children are

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2 looking at us as being the ones to lead
3 them and teach them. Parents are the
4 first ones that they see. So when we as
5 parents send our children to these school
6 buildings, we want them, no matter what
7 the economic status is, to be taught very
8 well by all qualities of teachers. So,
9 you know, we need to put money and
10 resources but, at the same time, make it
11 accountable to make sure that the money
12 is being used properly, you know, because
13 I don't want to see money getting thrown
14 into a school building or education or
15 anything and at the end of the day,
16 they're not coming out with a
17 high-quality education. It shouldn't
18 rely on what my pockets are or parents
19 shouldn't be pulling their child out of,
20 you know, Head Start -- and that's a very
21 good learning facility -- because the
22 parent can't afford it.

23 Now, when it comes down to
24 that, you know, and I look at the School
25 District and say to myself, why -- when

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2 it comes down to Head Start, Head Start,
3 they shouldn't even be having that
4 problem, because what I look at is if
5 they have so many other organizations
6 that's in -- that's partnering up with
7 the School District, then why isn't the
8 School District asking the,
9 quote/unquote, partners that they
10 partnered up with to invest into their
11 Head Start programs and pulling other
12 community, you know, Head Start programs
13 into the School District to bring quality
14 into the public school system in regards
15 to, you know, Head Start.

16 So that's all I have to say.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you very much.

19 Are there any questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Anyone
22 else to testify?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
25 thank you very much. I'm going to ask

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2 the Clerk to read that poem and then we
3 will recess subject to the call of the
4 Chair.

5 THE CLERK: As writer and
6 family counselor, Dr. Dorothy Law Nolte
7 reminds us: If children live with
8 criticism, they learn to condemn. If
9 children live with hostility, they learn
10 to fight. If children live with fear,
11 they learn to be apprehensive. If
12 children live with pity, they learn to
13 feel sorry for themselves. If children
14 live with ridicule, they learn to feel
15 shy. If children live with jealousy,
16 they learn to feel envy. If children
17 live with shame, they learn to feel
18 guilty.

19 If children live with
20 encouragement, they learn confidence. If
21 children live with tolerance, they learn
22 patience. If children live with praise,
23 they learn appreciation. If children
24 live with acceptance, they learn to love.
25 If children live with approval, they

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2 learn to like themselves. If children
3 live with recognition, they learn it is
4 good to have a goal.

5 If children live with sharing,
6 they learn generosity. If children live
7 with honesty, they learn truthfulness.
8 If children live with fairness, they
9 learn justice. If children live with
10 kindness and consideration, they learn
11 respect. If children live with security,
12 they learn to have faith in themselves
13 and in those about them. If children
14 live with friendliness, they learn the
15 world is a nice place in which to live.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you all very much for your testimony, for
18 caring about this issue of early
19 childhood education, and, again, we will
20 recess subject to the call of the Chair.

21 Let me thank a special thanks
22 to Councilman Oh, who always is dutiful
23 and always works with us at our hearing
24 and stays the entire time.

25 Thank you all again.

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2 (Committee on Education
3 concluded at 1:45 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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