

**Learning** STARTS  
WITH **Listening**

## Dear Friends of the Denver Preschool Program,

**As you've no doubt heard us say before, we are guided by a vision of ensuring that Denver's children enter kindergarten ready to reach their full potential.**

However, that vision is so much more than just an intellectual concept or a phrase on our website. It is what gets us out of bed every morning, what drives us throughout the day and what sometimes keeps us up at night. We know for a fact—because research has proven over and over—that quality early education benefits children long after they've left preschool. We know that children who attend high-quality preschool programs are more likely to graduate high school, attend college and have successful careers. We know education, including early childhood education, is the best way to end multigenerational poverty. And we know that lifting children and families out of poverty not only helps them, it also benefits our community as a whole.

Because of this knowledge, we celebrate the fact that we were able to serve more than 4,700 Denver children and families in the 2017-2018 program year and that in total those families received **more than \$13.5 million in tuition support.**

However, we also know that we're only reaching approximately 60% of eligible families in our city, and that's not acceptable to us. We've therefore been listening closely to our families and providers to better understand what they want and need in order to determine why 40% of families aren't taking advantage of DPP—and how we can change that.

**As a result 2018 was an exciting year of evolution at DPP.** We heard loud and clear that tuition continues to be a challenge for families, so we implemented the **greatest one-time increase** to our tuition credit scale in the organization's history, **increasing the amount of funds available to families by 10.7%.** We also

announced plans to expand our quality improvement (QI) program starting in the fall of 2018 to include 3-year-old classrooms because two years of high-quality preschool are even more impactful when it comes to preparing children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Because **listening to our stakeholders is a priority at DPP, whether we're examining research results or gathering feedback from providers and families,** we spent much of 2018 in the community. We hosted Neighborhood Preschool Showcases and spent time with families at outreach events all across the city. We also met with every school we serve in 2018 to ensure we are partnering with them in the most effective ways possible. Thanks to all of those interactions, we've learned a lot.

While we were engaging with our families and providers in their communities, we also set our sights on developing a new, centrally located community-gathering space. After several months of renovation, we now have a room designed specifically to support our friends and partners, and our own office space for the first time in our organization's history. We hope you visit us and take advantage of this wonderful new resource in the near future.

We're proud of the milestones we accomplished in 2018 and what they mean for Denver—and we remain deeply grateful for the support of the City and County of Denver and its residents. None of this would be possible without the support of Denver voters who understand the importance of early childhood education. Your ongoing support is crucial to our ability to continue to positively impact the lives of our treasured children—and by extension, our city as a whole.

Of course, the kind of impact we seek to have takes an outstanding, dedicated team and a tremendous leader. To ensure our continued strength, DPP developed and solidified our succession plan in 2018 to help make leadership transitions as seamless as possible. We put that plan into action following the decision by our CEO Jennifer Landrum to step down in January 2019. As this report goes to print, we are honored and excited to welcome Elsa Holguín as our new leader. Elsa is truly a pillar of our state's early childhood education community. Among many other accomplishments, she is co-chair of Colorado's Early Childhood Leadership Commission, and she spent the past 21 years at the Rose Community Foundation as its senior program officer for child & family development. During that time she played a pivotal role in developing the initiative that eventually became DPP. We are thrilled to begin this new chapter in the life of DPP with her at the helm.

With Elsa leading our team through the rest of 2019 and beyond, we will continue listening to learn how to most effectively further our mission to champion, fund and increase access to quality preschool across our community—and to inspire others to do the same because we know it matters. We thank you again for your support, and we look forward to a bright future together.

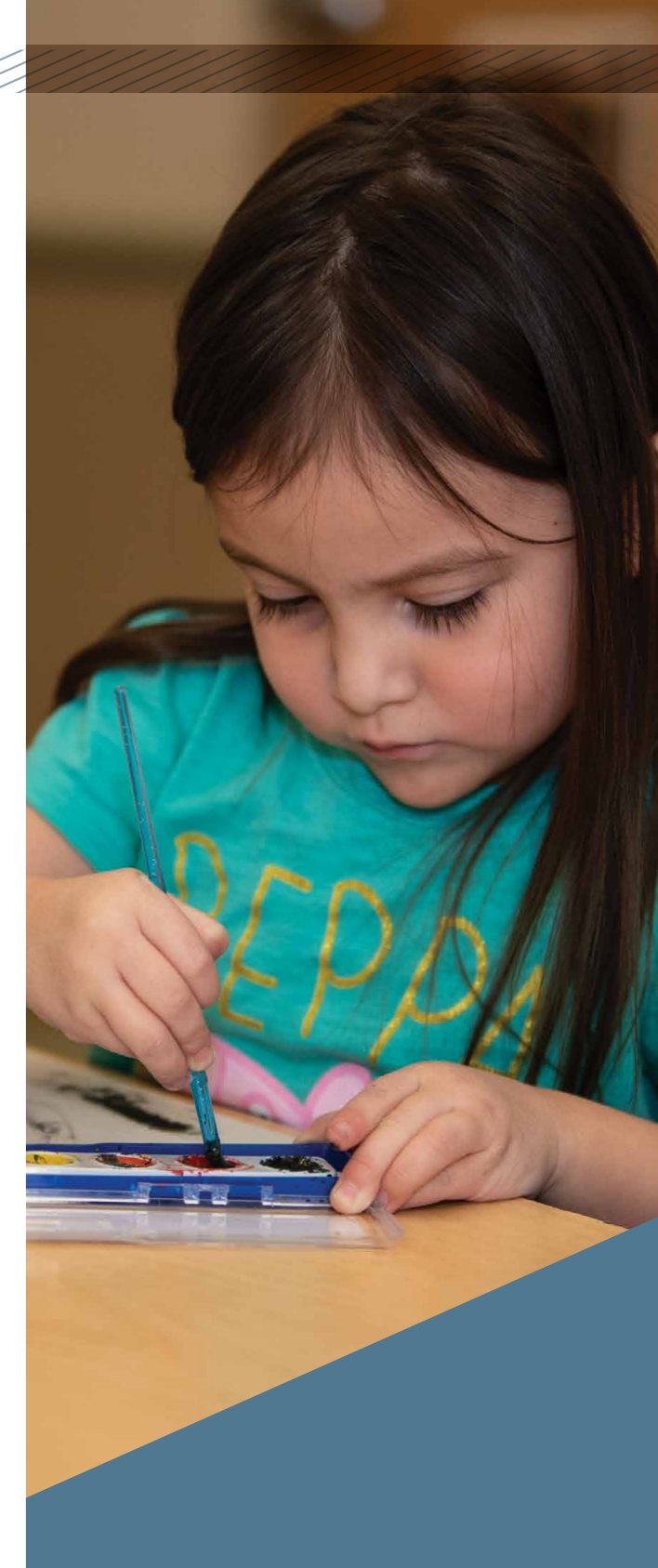
Sincerely,



*Ellen Braun*  
**ELLEN BRAUN**  
Interim President  
and CEO, DPP



*Zach Hochstadt*  
**ZACH HOCHSTADT**  
Chair, DPP Board  
of Directors



# Responding to the Need TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Investing in families through tuition support is how DPP has the greatest direct impact on the Denver community. Put simply, we help families pay for preschool. More than two-thirds (70%) of our budget, which comes from a dedicated, voter-approved 0.15% sales tax, is allocated to this endeavor. **With these funds, we have the ability to help all Denver families with a child in their last year of preschool before kindergarten pay tuition at one of our many participating preschool programs, regardless of income.**

In an effort to have the greatest possible impact across our community, DPP distributes tuition credits based on a sliding scale that considers:

- 1 A family's income**
- 2 The quality rating of a family's chosen program**
- 3 The number of hours per day a child attends preschool**

**Every year nearly 5,000 children and their families benefit from this support. We'd love to take this opportunity to share just one of those stories with you:**

Amy's daughter Aria attends Paddington Station Preschool. When Amy accepted a new full-time job and needed extended-day preschool for her daughter, she and her husband were worried

that the extra preschool tuition would be cost-prohibitive, and they didn't want Aria to have to change schools. Amy credits DPP's tuition support with allowing them to keep their little girl at the school she loves while extending her day to accommodate her mom's new work schedule.

"DPP's tuition support is a true gift to our family," explained Amy. "Thanks to their tuition credits, I was able to accept a position that I'm passionate about and return to work while still being able to afford the best possible preschool for our daughter—even with the added cost of extended-day care."

We've worked with and listened to thousands of families like Amy's over the years, and we consistently hear how today's cost of living creates obstacles when it comes to paying for preschool. In an ongoing effort to respond to this need, DPP was able to increase the tuition support we offer by an additional 3.5% beginning in January 2019 (above and beyond the 10.7% increase we implemented in 2018), meaning an even greater positive impact on families' finances. This was only the second time in our history that we've been able to increase the support we provide to our families in the middle of the school year. As we look to the 2019-2020 school year, our hope is that this additional funding will make it possible for even more Denver families to send their children to the preschool that best meets their needs.



**“ DPP'S TUITION SUPPORT IS A TRUE GIFT TO OUR FAMILY.** Thanks to their tuition credits, I was able to accept a position that I'm passionate about and return to work while still being able to afford the best possible preschool for our daughter.”

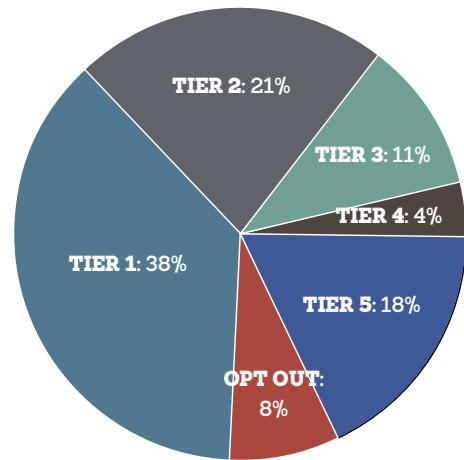
AMY  
DPP Parent

# WHO WE SERVE

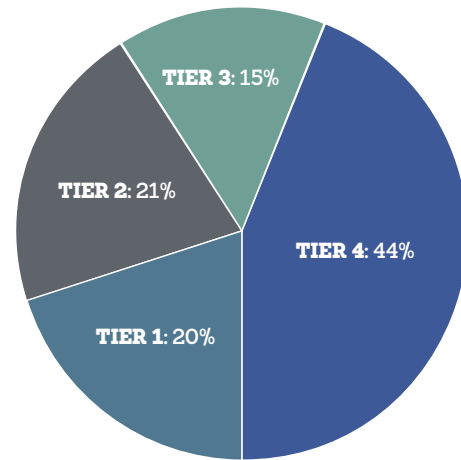
Tuition credits from DPP are available to every Denver family—regardless of income or neighborhood—who has a child enrolled in a participating program in their last year of preschool before kindergarten. See below to learn more about the total number of children we served during the 2017-2018 school year.

## BY INCOME TIER, Based on Federal Poverty Level Percentages

CHILDREN SERVED (2017-18)



DENVER CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6 (2014)



### FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL PERCENTAGES\*

- TIER 1: <100%
- TIER 2: 100-185%
- TIER 3: 185-300%
- TIER 4: 300-400%
- TIER 5: >400%

\*In 2017 a family of four at 100% of the FPL earned less than \$24,420 per year.

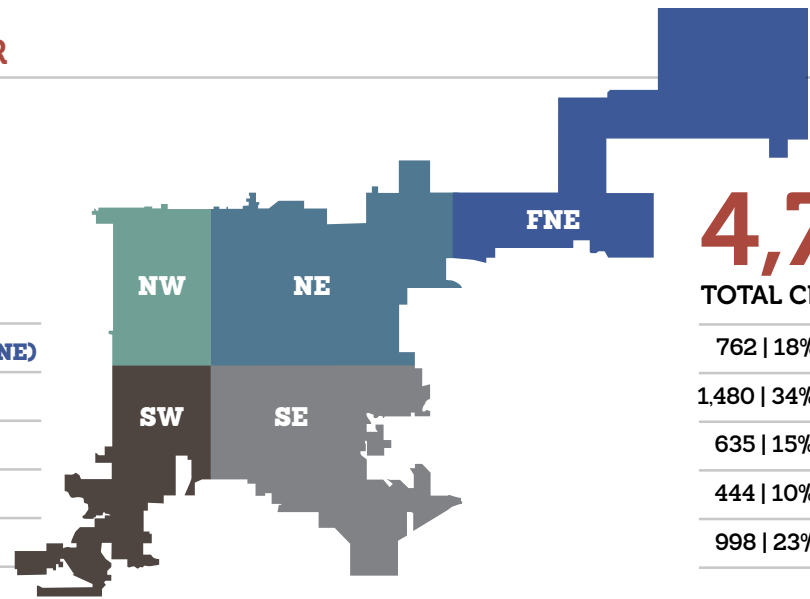
Source: Kidscount.org data center - 2014 American Community Survey

## BY REGION OF DENVER

# 247

TOTAL PROGRAMS (2017-18)

- 29 | 11.74% FAR NORTH EAST (FNE)
- 80 | 32.39% NORTH EAST (NE)
- 47 | 19.03% NORTH WEST (NW)
- 31 | 12.55% SOUTH EAST (SE)
- 45 | 18.22% SOUTH WEST (SW)
- 15 | 6.07% OUT OF COUNTY



# 4,702

TOTAL CHILDREN SERVED (2017-18)

- 762 | 18% FNE
- 1,480 | 34% NE
- 635 | 15% NW
- 444 | 10% SE
- 998 | 23% SW

# Celebrating the Success of One of OUR FIRST STUDENTS

It's important to have the data to demonstrate the value of our program, but the heartwarming proof comes in the real-life stories we hear from our participants. DPP has served nearly 55,000 children over our 12-year lifespan, and one of those children Brooklyn is now a thriving middle school student. Her mother, Whitney, is quick to credit Brooklyn's early education experience, along with the tuition support their family received from DPP, as key in providing her daughter with the solid foundation she needed to excel.

Just nine months after she gave birth to Brooklyn, doctors told Whitney that her only child had albinism. "They thought she'd never be able to see, drive a car, play sports or keep up in class," Whitney recounted. Still, she believed Brooklyn's future would be bright with the support of her family and teachers. "Education has always been important to us, so I knew I had to find a place for Brooklyn to go."

As a preschooler Brooklyn attended King Baptist Child Development Center and Preschool where she received tuition support from DPP. "King Baptist helped her bloom. The teachers were attentive and worked closely with Brooklyn to make sure she was growing with the other children," Whitney explained. Brooklyn also learned how to get along with others through that experience. **"She has always been talkative, but being an only child made it hard for her to be social. King Baptist taught her how to play and share with her peers. Looking back, I think they really prepared her for kindergarten and beyond. She was never behind."**

Now 13 years old, Brooklyn continues to prove doctors wrong at every turn. Not only has her vision improved, but she has also maintained outstanding grades, reached her middle school's basketball championships twice and become passionate about social justice. Besides local activism, she's also keeping busy these days by charting a path to a career in engineering, much to the joy of her family. "For any parent out there who is on the preschool journey, don't let anything that's been said about your child deter you from making sure they get the best education they possibly can," said Whitney. "Preschool helped Brooklyn excel."

DPP is honored to support families like Brooklyn's, helping to ensure that Denver's children grow up to be engaged, productive adults.



## Listening & Innovating: RAISING THE BAR

Throughout our history DPP has worked tirelessly to continuously raise the bar on what it means to provide quality education to Denver's youngest residents, listening to and leveraging feedback from our coaches and teachers to do so. 2018 was no exception. In fact, we expanded our QI program to 3-year-old classrooms beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, meaning we are reaching children earlier than ever before and ensuring continuity of care beginning even earlier in their development.

The catalyst for broadening DPP's QI service area came from DPP's coaching and rating teams, as well as preschool directors who called attention to the unmet needs in younger preschool classrooms—particularly the lack of equity in terms of quality in those classrooms.

QI resources such as coaching, curriculum/child assessment tools, classroom learning materials, professional development trainings, scholarship opportunities and achievement awards are now available to all preschool classrooms at DPP-participating schools.

"More highly effective preschools and preschool educators mean greater access to high-quality early education in our community," commented Coach Manager Christine O'Brien.

We are excited to see how expanding our QI resources to younger classrooms impacts the children we serve, and we'll certainly be listening for ongoing feedback—both directly from providers and through our outcomes research. We are confident that this move to reach children at an even younger age than before will help ensure even brighter futures for them, their families and our community.

**“THE COACHING THAT WE RECEIVE FROM DPP IS SO IMPORTANT. What a blessing to have access to resources that help our children build a strong educational foundation even earlier. With these tools and materials in place, these children are simply blossoming.”**

**EARNESTINE WOODBERRY**  
Director, Cannon Learning Center, DPP-participating school





## Preparing Children for BRIGHT FUTURES

Denver prospers as our children prosper. Because Denver voters chose to fund early childhood education, our children can enter kindergarten ready to succeed. More and more research, including our own, demonstrates that this success continues throughout children's school years and into adulthood. Their ability to become engaged, productive citizens means a more vibrant community for everyone.

Because the effectiveness of our programs is so critical to the children and families we serve, research is one of our cornerstones and yet another way that we are able to listen, learn and grow. We focus on the short- and long-term outcomes of children in our program, as well as the impact of our provider-focused QI program and the strength of our initiatives overall. We're continuously examining the effectiveness of our work and leveraging the data we gather to identify and address areas where we can ultimately better prepare Denver's children for the bright futures they deserve.

Since 2007 DPP has partnered with Clayton Early Learning's research and evaluation team on a study to understand student progress during preschool, kindergarten readiness and the impact of receiving tuition credits on academic outcomes through the end of high school. **The 2017-2018 school year saw the study's 10th cohort, or group of students, enter preschool, while its initial cohort began eighth grade.**

This year the study's youngest learners included a representative sample of 240 preschool children across 111 DPP preschool providers. In looking at kindergarten readiness, researchers focused on the progress students made from the fall to the spring of the school year in terms of pre-academic and cognitive skills, as well as social-emotional development. We're excited to share the latest data with you.

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Kindergarten Readiness Study:

**83-92%**  
OF DPP CHILDREN WERE READY  
FOR KINDERGARTEN

The vast majority of DPP children (83-92%) met the kindergarten readiness benchmark for all assessments in English and Spanish, except for Spanish vocabulary (42%).

**82.4%** MEETING OR EXCEEDING  
EXPECTATIONS  
IN VOCABULARY

82.4% of children met or exceeded expectations in vocabulary in at least one language (English or Spanish). Similarly, 70.6% of children met or exceeded expectations in early literacy in at least one language while 74.4% met or exceeded expectations in at least one language in math.

**IMPROVEMENTS IN  
INITIATIVE,  
SELF-REGULATION  
& ATTACHMENT**

Children showed a statistically significant improvement from fall to spring in terms of their initiative, self-regulation and attachment, as observed by teachers.

**In a separate outcomes study, conducted with Denver Public Schools and assessing children in kindergarten through third grade, the findings show that DPP students:**

**LOWER LIKELIHOOD OF  
BEING PLACED ON A  
READ PLAN**

DPP students were less likely to be placed on a READ Plan\* compared to similar, non-DPP students.

**FEWER  
LOW-INCOME  
STUDENTS PLACED ON A  
READ PLAN**

Among low-income students, there was a lower proportion of DPP students on a READ Plan\* than similar low-income, non-DPP students.

**PERFORMED BETTER IN  
LITERACY  
& MATH**

In third grade, DPP students were more likely to perform better on literacy and math assessments than similar, non-DPP students.

*\*A specialized plan for children reading significantly below grade level*

**How Millions of Dollars Supported THOUSANDS OF DENVER'S CHILDREN**

Tuition support, 2017-2018 income tier distribution and related demographics

Provided **\$13.5 MILLION** in tuition credits in 2017-2018

Typical monthly credit: **\$617\***  
\*Tier 1, full-day, quality 4 preschool

Provided **\$2.07 MILLION** in Quality Improvement funds in 2017-2018

**4,702** children received tuition credits

Nearly **250** quality-rated preschool providers in Denver

## OUR EXPENDITURES

Tuition credits from DPP are available to every Denver family—regardless of income or neighborhood—who has a child enrolled in a participating program in their last year of preschool before kindergarten.

### 2018 Calendar-Year Financials\*\*

As a steward of public funds, we hold ourselves to the highest standard of accountability. This is how we used tax dollars during the 2018 calendar year to expand access to high-quality preschool programs in Denver.

**73% TUITION:** \$14,607,160

**11.6% QUALITY:** \$2,322,319

**3.4% REGISTRATION:** \$687,618

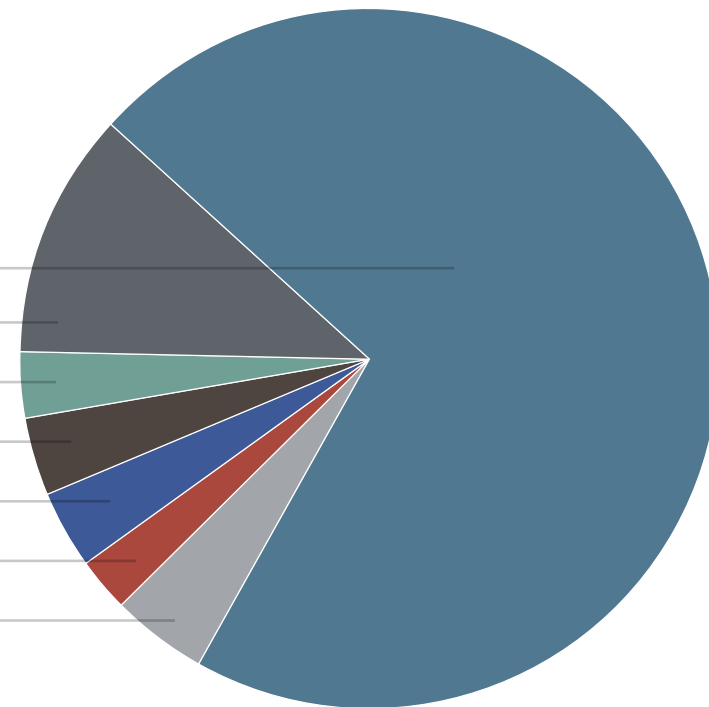
**3.5% EVALUATION:** \$701,573

**3.7% OUTREACH:** \$742,799

**2.7% OTHER SERVICES:** \$54,734

**4.3% ADMINISTRATIVE:** \$867,571

**TOTAL:** \$19,983,774



\*\*The above numbers do not take into consideration the accounting rule change ASU 2018-08 for the current accounting year.

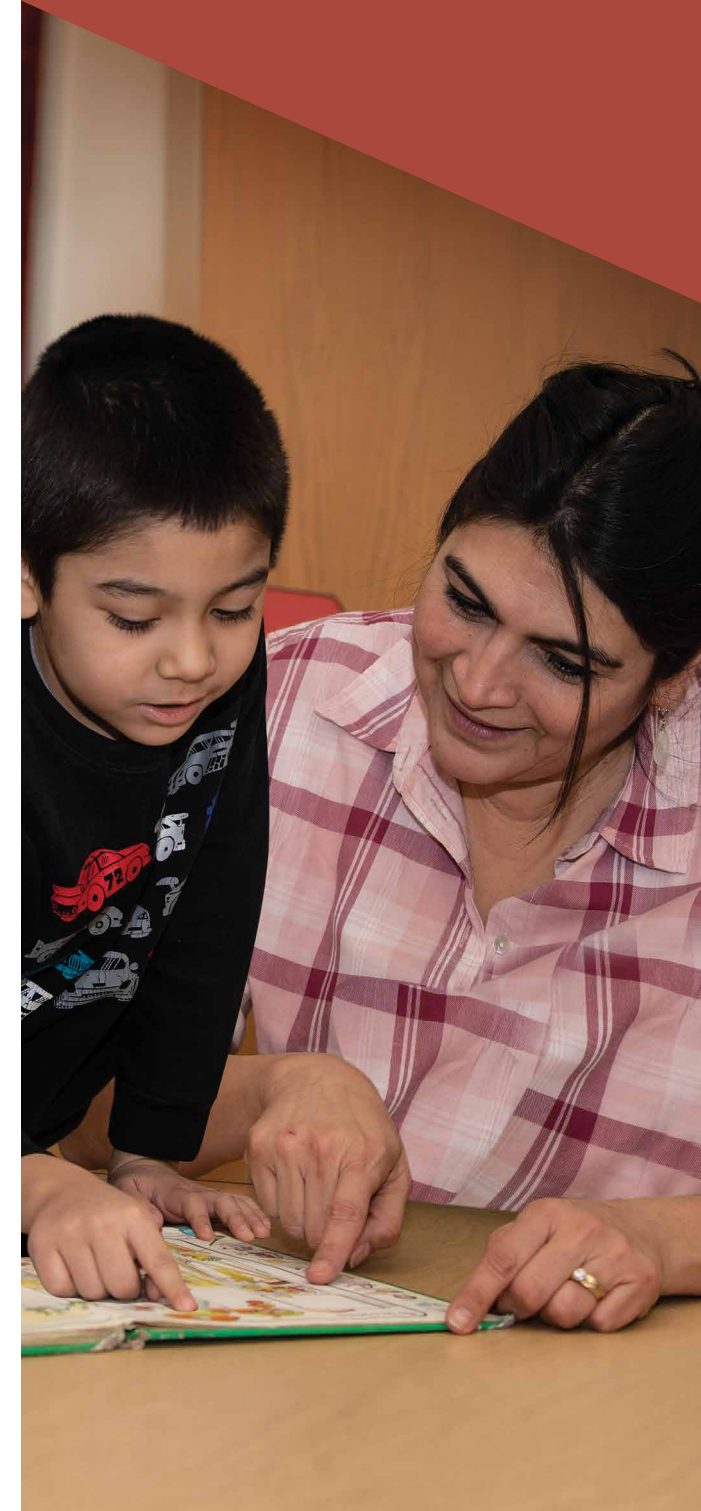
## Partnering With Educators to STRENGTHEN PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

While two-thirds of our budget directly supports tuition assistance for families, we recognize that educators need support, too. That's why we also dedicate funding to coaching educators and helping them reach their goals.

As a coach and quality specialist for Denver's Early Childhood Council, Jennifer Garcia works directly with DPP preschool teachers and directors. Together, they assess the needs of their early learning programs. Jennifer listens to the goals they have for their program and for themselves, then helps create a plan to reach those goals. "I provide coaching that can be tailored to a teacher's learning style," she explained. Coaches like Jennifer are funded through DPP and work alongside preschool directors and teachers to increase the quality of early childhood education available in Denver.

Jennifer's own family sparked her desire to work with preschool teachers. "I come from an adoptive family of 10, so when I was in my twenties, I helped my little brothers and sisters attend their early education programs," she related. "Through them, I became familiar with preschool classrooms and how important they are, and that was what inspired me to pursue early childhood development as a career."

In some cases, Jennifer's coaching involves addressing basic needs like essential classroom materials. Other times, what educators benefit from most is personal support. DPP's Quality Improvement resources for providers include coaching and professional development trainings. By participating, teachers and providers are eligible for financial benefits. Jennifer said, "I know DPP appreciates teachers' time and effort building their credentials, so I like to remind teachers that they can also earn a nice bonus for their hard work."



# Supporting the Dedication and Passion of EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Early childhood educators—whether they are administrators, teachers or teacher assistants—have an immense impact on our children and, in turn, our communities. These individuals work tirelessly to educate and nurture our children; therefore, we place a high priority on supporting them in their professional growth, as well as honoring and recognizing them for their dedication.

We heard from our providers that there was a need for a scholarship to support teachers seeking to become certified. To address this, we launched a new Child Development Associate (CDA)<sup>™</sup> scholarship in 2018 specifically for assistant teachers who are striving to become Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) qualified. The scholarship pays for aspiring lead teachers to complete the DPP CDA Training and Seminar, facilitated by our partners at Mile High Early Learning. The CDA model is especially

impactful for educators who are seeking an alternative to taking college courses. Thanks in part to this new scholarship, **79 assistant teachers received their lead teacher certification credentials in 2018.**

In addition, DPP has continued to fund T.E.A.C.H.<sup>®</sup> Scholarships for educators seeking to complete their early childhood college coursework. **The 49 scholarships awarded in 2018 helped early childhood professionals achieve their credentials and/or pursue associate's and bachelor's degrees in early education.**



## Supporting and encouraging our providers goes beyond simply helping fund ongoing education.

For the past three years, DPP has also hosted our own professional development programs, called Forums, to give our teachers and administrators unique opportunities to gather and learn as a community of educators. Our third Forum training series took place in early 2018 and focused on family engagement and support based on requests we received from our schools and teachers.

### Specifically, Forum participants learned about:

THE LINKS BETWEEN  
**FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT**  
AND  
Student Learning + Development

HOW TO BUILD  
**EFFECTIVE  
FAMILY-SCHOOL  
PARTNERSHIPS**

HOW TO DEVELOP  
**EQUITABLE  
STRATEGIES**  
TO MEET THE NEEDS OF  
ALL FAMILIES,  
regardless of cultural and/or  
linguistic differences

While we were delighted to have an average of **73 attendees per session in 2018**, our hope is to reach many more of our providers and continue to build a sense of community among them through this Forum series. We determine our topics largely based on attendee feedback, as well as our evaluation data. If you have suggestions for future topics, we'd love to hear from you!



## Responding to Community Need: DPP'S NEW HOME

One of the milestones we're excited to share with our partners is our beautiful new community and office space.

We listened to our community and heard clearly that they needed a dedicated place to convene, share ideas and learn from one another. We made this a reality by renovating our office and adding a new community space. Dubbed the Michael B. Hancock Community Room, this room celebrates Mayor Hancock's passion for Denver's children and equal access to quality early education for each and every one of them. Since our opening, we have hosted groups including Early Milestones Colorado, The Colorado Nonprofit Association, Together Colorado, Denver Public Schools and more.

"Providing our children with equity and a sense of community has always been a priority for me and my administration," Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. "I am proud of the incredible work of this organization, and I am both humbled and honored to have my name coupled with DPP's new community room. The Denver Preschool Program has proven that high-quality early childhood education helps lay a foundation for a lifetime of success for our youngest learners, regardless of income or neighborhood. I look forward to our continued partnership as we keep building pathways for bright futures for all of Denver's children."

**We hope our new space serves as a shared gathering place to continue supporting and advocating for early childhood policies and strategies that ultimately help our youngest learners succeed. Community members are always welcome to this space—whether for meetings or simply to stop by to say hello.**

“DENVER THRIVES WHEN OUR KIDS THRIVE because they are our future workforce, leaders and community members. All kids, no matter their background, deserve the chance to positively impact Colorado's future, and DPP gives them the foundation to do just that. By investing in our youngest learners, DPP is making an invaluable investment in their future as well as that of our community.”

GLORIA HIGGINS  
First DPP Board Chair





## Looking Forward and LISTENING CAREFULLY

Identifying and serving 4-year-olds with high financial needs remains essential to DPP's goal of supporting Denver families with preschool-aged children. While high-quality preschool helps all children who participate, the benefits are particularly great for children who come from low-income families. In an effort to prioritize this need, DPP announced the creation of the DPP Gap Scholarship pilot approach for 2019-2020, along with strategies for measuring its effectiveness at making preschool more affordable for Denver's lowest-income families.

The Gap Scholarship program seeks to make preschool affordable for Denver families with the greatest financial need. It aims to support full- or extended-day students participating in the pilot who do not receive other public preschool funds. The scholarship will also support families living at or below 300% of the federal poverty line who pay more than 12% of their income to preschool tuition costs after their DPP tuition credits. Looking forward we will continue to create new ways to connect with Denver families and preschoolers, innovating on our current model as we strive to reach 100% of eligible families and provide the highest quality early education experience possible.

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