



New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council

Robert G. Frawley, Co-Chair
NYS Council on Children & Families

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Dear Colleague:

This is an exciting time for the state of New York. As co-chairs of the NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council, we want to enlist your help. The Federal Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have joined together to sponsor the Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge. This \$500 million initiative is designed to support states to develop early childhood systems distinguished by their approach to increasing access for children, to high quality early childhood programs and services. This initiative is built around establishing and implementing a quality rating and improvement system which integrates health and emotional development and is linked to comprehensive child assessment, work force development, family engagement, and cross-agency data systems. New York is eligible to compete for \$100M.

Governor Cuomo announced his decision to apply for this opportunity in July 2011 and has made it a priority of his education agenda. To develop the proposal, a team has been established under the Governor's leadership, in partnership with the State Education Department, Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), Office of Children and Family Services and several state agencies. As you may know, New York was fortunate to receive a Race to the Top Grant to reform Kindergarten to 12th Grade education and this new initiative represents an unprecedented opportunity for New York to develop a continuum of education that truly begins at birth and lasts a lifetime. Specifically, this grant will provide the essential infrastructure and tools to promote school readiness for all children, especially those with high needs.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council, established in 2009, has worked diligently to create QUALITYstarsNY, a tiered quality rating and improvement system, a system of work force and professional development known as *New York Works for Children*, as well as other components essential to this initiative. Its 48 members, representing state agencies and public and private individuals and organization are committed to the vision that all young children are healthy, learning and thriving in families.

Your support is critical to New York's success in this effort. A section of the proposal will feature letters of support from individuals and agencies that work on behalf of children and we would like you to be represented in this effort.

Original letters that address your work and acknowledge the importance that this new funding can play in the future of our state's youngest citizens will strengthen our position in this competition. For your reference, we enclose guidance that should be helpful in your efforts and we thank you in advance, for your assistance. Letter should be received in the Governor's office no later than October 7, 2011.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Frawley
Co-Chair



Sherry M. Cleary
Co-Chair

Enclosure

Instructions for Writing Letters of Support

Letters should be addressed to:

Governor Andrew Cuomo
c/o Katie Campos, Asst. Secretary for Education
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Deadline: Letters need to be received by **October 7, 2011.**

Suggestions for writing your letter:

It is important that letters are original and reflect your agency's mission, your work and how it may contribute to the mission of this new initiative.

Your letter might detail how you've already contributed to the components of the grant (see list of components below). You might discuss how you expect to contribute to the components in the future and/or how you envision the receipt of this grant as a benefit to New York and its children and families. If you would like to discuss this letter and its contents, further do not hesitate to call either Sherry Cleary 718 254-7285 or Bob Frawley 518 587-5226.

Primary components of this proposal are:

- implement of QUALITYstarsNY, our tiered quality rating and improvement system
- development and use of high quality early learning and development standards
- support of effective use of comprehensive assessment systems, including the administration of a common state-wide kindergarten entry assessment
- address health, behavioral, and developmental needs
- engage and support families
- implement *New York Works for Children*, which includes a common statewide competency-based knowledge framework and addresses a range of approaches to develop skill, knowledge and ability in the early childhood workforce.
- Build an early learning data system