

# **Raising All Boats:**

**Community-Based Programs as Partners in Universal  
Prekindergarten**

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**T**his report is dedicated to community-based programs that have provided Universal Prekindergarten over the past six years—and to the directors, advisory boards, teachers, assistant teachers, and other staff of these programs. Your willingness to work in new partnerships with local schools has helped lead the way for New York to be a model for other states in providing quality early care and education services.

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# Foreword

**F**our years ago, the Cornell Early Childhood Program published a report entitled *Collaborating for Kids: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*, presenting a view of New York’s Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Program during the first two years of implementation from the perspective of school district personnel. This research shed light on issues surrounding the program’s implementation, addressing areas of accessibility, community collaboration, curriculum, teacher preparation and development, financing, program successes, and challenges from the school district’s viewpoint.

One noteworthy finding at that time was that over 50% of UPK children were being served in non-school, community-based settings, a percentage that has increased since then. Given New York’s reliance on non-school settings, it became clear that in order to provide an accurate portrait of UPK, we needed the insights of the people directing these programs—the directors of child care centers, private preschools, Head Start programs, nursery schools, group family day care homes, and preschool special education centers. Using the *Collaborating for Kids* report as a springboard, this inquiry examines the early years of the program’s implementation from the perspective of the many community-based organizations that serve as UPK sites. Findings indicate that Universal Prekindergarten brings “added value” to community-based early childhood programs in many areas, especially increased access by children from low-income families, financial stability, and a number of aspects of program quality.

Suggested audiences for this report include:

- *Community-based organizations* involved in UPK
- *School district personnel* that work closely with community organizations providing UPK services
- *Community-based agencies* interested in becoming UPK sites
- *First-time school districts* planning to implement a UPK program
- *State policymakers* considering legislation to facilitate the UPK implementation process
- *Early care and education advocates* who wish to promote successful UPK programs locally and statewide
- *The general prekindergarten audience* nationwide promoting similar universal prekindergarten programs

By offering services to all four-year-olds in the state, New York's Universal Prekindergarten Program has the potential to promote children's development and school readiness as well as improve the quality of New York's early care and education system as a whole. The success of the program rests on the program's implementation and the cooperation of local districts and community-based organizations. We encourage you to read our other published reports on Universal Prekindergarten:

- *Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*
- *Collaborating for Kids: New York State Universal Prekindergarten 1999-2000*
- *Continuing the Collaboration: New York State Universal Prekindergarten Expansion 2000-2001*
- *Early Care for Infants and Toddlers: Examining the Broader Impacts of Universal Prekindergarten*
- *Implementing a State-wide Universal Prekindergarten Program: (Case study series)*
  - *A New York City Case Study*
  - *A Small City Case Study*
  - *A Rural Case Study*
  - *An Urban Case Study*

More information on these publications is provided in Appendix A.

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# Acknowledgments

**W**e are grateful to a number of individuals who assisted with the study and publication of this document. First, we wish to express our deepest appreciation to the directors of the community-based programs who took the time to complete the surveys and return them to us. We realize that it is not always easy to find the time to do additional paperwork, particularly when considerable work is already involved with the necessary school district reporting requirements. Without you, this report—and a more comprehensive understanding of UPK—would not be possible.

Much time was needed to identify the centers providing UPK, match names and addresses, monitor the data collection, and complete the analysis. For this, we are grateful to members of the Cornell Early Childhood Program Student Team who've assisted with this study—Erin Ellis, Nina Shiffrin, and Rachel Wechsler. Special thanks also to Sarah Watamura for input into the research design and survey questions, and to Kimberly Tan and Emily Miller for assistance with editing.

Many individuals over the years have been supportive, not only of UPK, but also of our research efforts. Thank you to State Education Department colleagues Cindy Gallagher, Dee Dwyer, Susan Megna, and Ruth Singer of the Early Education and Reading Initiatives Office, for answering our many questions, providing feedback, and facilitating access to information, and to Associate Commissioner Shelia Evans-Tranumn for overall support. At Bank Street College, María Beneján of the Center for Universal Prekindergarten has provided us with much insight into the workings of UPK in New York City, and Meredith Lewis has provided helpful comments on this report. We also greatly appreciate the assistance provided to us by Eleanor Grieg Ukoli, Director of Early Childhood Programs, and Laurel Fraser, Early Childhood Administrator, with the New

York City Department of Education, in supporting our efforts and making suggestions to enhance our study of UPK. Special acknowledgement is also made to Karen Schimke of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy and to Nancy Kolben of Child Care Inc. (and of the Winning Beginnings Initiative) for their commitment to improving quality and accessibility for all children.

Thank you also to Larry Clarkberg and Crow Greenspun for designing this report.

Finally, we are thankful for the generosity of our funders, whose commitment to UPK and quality preschool programming made this study and report possible. Appreciation is expressed to an anonymous donor for supporting this survey-based research effort. Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. Ruby Takanishi and Fasaha Traylor of the Foundation for Child Development and Luba Lynch of the A. L. Mailman Family Foundation for their support of our overall efforts to understand the implementation of Universal Prekindergarten.

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# Executive Summary

**R***aising All Boats: Community-Based Programs as Partners in Universal Prekindergarten* presents findings from a survey to directors of child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start programs, private preschools, group family day care homes, and preschool special education programs that provide UPK services in New York State. Key areas of UPK implementation are addressed—school-community collaboration, teachers and staff, curriculum and programming, financing, program impacts, and evaluation. Because New York requires school districts to contract with local providers, the results enhance our understanding of the impacts of UPK on programs in local communities as well as the overall early care and education system. Recommendations for district planners and state officials also are provided. This research is part of a larger, comprehensive study that has included two surveys to school district UPK coordinators, extensive interviews in four case study districts, and surveys and interviews with child care resource and referral agencies across the state.

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## Key Provisions of the Universal Prekindergarten Legislation:

The statute that established the Universal Prekindergarten program and corresponding regulations consist of the following key provisions:<sup>1</sup>

- Prekindergarten classes for all New York State four-year-olds for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day and no fewer than 180 days per year
- Phase-in of the program over time. Originally, the goal was to serve all four-year-olds by the 2001-2002 school year with an annual budget of up to \$500 million
- Educational programming that promotes English literacy; meets the social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, cultural, and physical needs of children; meets the needs of families; integrates preschool children with disabilities; and provides continuity with the early elementary grades
- Attention to support services, parent involvement, assessment, and staff development in UPK plans
- Community collaboration, or contracting out, of at least 10% of UPK funds with organizations outside public school settings, such as child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start, and other community-based agencies, for the purpose of providing direct educational services to children

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 436 of the New York State Laws of 1997 contains the UPK legislation.



- Required teacher certification for eligibility to teach in UPK classrooms<sup>2</sup>
- Policy-making power vested in local planning groups and school boards to choose whether to implement a UPK program, and if so, to develop their own separate plans for the delivery of services
- Options of half-, full-, or extended-day services; families retain the choice of whether or not to enroll their children in UPK programs
- Until full implementation, the eligibility of a selected number of districts to participate each year as determined by the State Education Department using a statutory formula based primarily on economic need. An increasing proportion of children will be funded for UPK services during each year of a district's participation until all eligible children whose parents wish to enroll them are being served
- State funding at a minimum of \$2,000 and a maximum of \$4,000 per child
- For the 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 years, a provision that districts must give preference to a certain percentage of children classified as economically disadvantaged<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Although this requirement was intended to take effect in September 2001, it has been extended to September 2005.

<sup>3</sup> The criteria used by most districts is their free and reduced lunch ratio. The proportion of children served by UPK who are economically disadvantaged must be equal to or greater than the district's free and reduced lunch ratio. However, this was a district decision and some districts chose to use other criteria. This statutory provision sunset on June 30, 2002.

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## Key Findings and Recommendations

Findings and recommendations for enhancing the Universal Prekindergarten Program are highlighted under five main topics.

### School District-Community Collaboration

- An overall interest in UPK, the opportunity to improve program quality, having space available, being able to serve more children, and receiving an additional source of revenue were primary reasons CBOs decided to participate in the UPK program.
- Site visits, meetings, and telephone calls were common monitoring practices employed by school districts. Most directors felt that the amount of monitoring they received was “just right.”
- In general, CBO programs felt supported by their school district administrators. They did not feel constrained by the school district, although directors in New York City reported more constraint than did upstate directors.
- Directors reported good working relationships and good communication with their school districts. Reported somewhat less frequently was the district's willingness to learn from CBOs and having regular contact with other UPK sites. Directors in New York City were uncertain about the input they could provide to the district regarding the implementation of UPK.

### Universal Prekindergarten Teachers

- Slightly more than half of all lead teachers (UPK and non-UPK) at responding CBO programs were reported as holding a permanent or provisional New York State teaching certificate. A substantial number also held Bachelor's or Master's degrees without certification.

- Over 60% of directors reported their teachers averaged between zero and four years at their current center.
- UPK appears to be somewhat of an impetus for teacher certification. Forty percent of upstate and 54% of New York City programs reported they had teachers who became certified or who were in the process of becoming certified as a result of UPK. This translates to 11% of all upstate and 26% of New York City teachers working in these programs.
- Lead teachers working in UPK classrooms were reported as earning higher salaries than lead teachers in non-UPK classrooms. Upstate programs reported UPK teacher salaries between \$20,000 and \$25,000 most frequently, whereas salaries between \$30,000 and \$34,000 were most common in New York City. Most programs offered benefits such as health insurance and paid vacation.
- Directors reported problems with teacher recruitment and retention, possibly due to a shortage of certified teachers and the salary gap between teachers in CBO programs and public school teachers. Fifteen to 20% of programs reported they had lost teachers to the public schools.
- Directors felt that some kind of certification is necessary, with half agreeing with current requirements. About 40% felt that the current requirements are too strict.
- Meetings, conferences, workshops, program visitation, and classroom observations were the most common professional development activities. The availability of substitute teacher coverage was cited as the main barrier to participation in professional development activities.

### **Curriculum and Programming**

- Almost half of upstate and one-third of New York City programs reported they were accredited or in process of receiving accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- One-third of upstate and half of New York City programs indicated that the curriculum they used was required by the school district.
- The majority of programs indicated they could meet the needs of children with disabilities fairly well.
- Overall, New York City programs felt they could meet the needs of English language learners fairly well; upstate programs felt less able to do so.
- Programs reported a number of transition-to-kindergarten activities in place such as cumulative folders, portfolios, information sharing, and program visitation. Joint prekindergarten and kindergarten meetings were mentioned by about a third of the programs.
- Family involvement was an important component of the programs, with parent-teacher conferences, family events, and field trips mentioned most frequently.

## Financing

- Responding CBO programs reported an array of funding streams including parent fees, UPK funding, the Department of Social Services, Head Start, and the USDA Food Assistance Program. The average cost per week per four-year-old without UPK funds was reported to be \$189 in New York City compared to \$140 upstate.
- The majority of CBO programs in New York City received between \$3,000 and \$3,499 per child in UPK funds while most upstate programs received between \$2,000 and \$2,499.
- For both upstate and New York City programs, parent fees and UPK funding comprised more than half of programs' total revenue on average.
- About 40% of all directors felt that funding was adequate, with the remainder feeling it was either more or less adequate. A small percentage felt it was either completely adequate or completely inadequate.
- The majority of programs received their UPK funding within the first three months of the school year.
- Multi-year contracts were common in New York City but seldom used in the upstate region. They were reported to be beneficial to the programs.
- UPK funds were used most often for educational and programming purposes. A substantial number of programs also used them for hiring teachers and staff, increasing salaries, and hiring substitutes. Programs receiving more than \$3000 per child were significantly more likely to use these funds for equipment, educational materials, hiring new teachers, and hiring assistants than were programs receiving less funding.

## Impacts & Evaluations of UPK

- Many directors indicated they had made changes to their programs to enhance their application for UPK such as staff development and training, hiring teachers, and improving facilities.
- About half of programs increased the total number of children served, and many increased the number from economically disadvantaged families, English language learners, and children with special needs. The number of infants and toddlers served remained relatively unaffected.
- Programs hired additional teachers and staff. Teachers' salaries increased in over 40% of programs, with increases generally up to 15%.
- Half of programs made curriculum changes, such as increased literacy and math programming. Some change was also noted in parent involvement practices and transition to kindergarten activities.
- Fifty to 60% of programs that charge parent fees reduced these fees partially or completely.
- Sixty percent of programs indicated higher revenues as a result of UPK.

- To a moderate extent, directors reported a greater sharing of resources with school districts, improved assessment practices, increased communication with other community-based programs, improved access to support services, and a greater focus on developmentally appropriate practices.
- The continuation of UPK by the State, having adequate funding, and losing certified teachers to the school district were responding CBO directors' top concerns.
- Overall satisfaction with the UPK program was high.

### **Recommendations**

- ★ *Recommendation 1:* Increase the required minimum UPK investment by school districts in community-based programming from the current 10% to 25%.
- ★ *Recommendation 2:* If evidence indicates that program quality is reduced when school districts provide less than a specified amount of funding per-child to community-based organizations, the State Department of Education should establish a minimum amount per child that all participating districts must provide in contracts with community-based organizations.
- ★ *Recommendation 3:* The State Education Department should require school districts to include CBO teachers and other staff in all the UPK-related staff development activities provided by the district.
- ★ *Recommendation 4:* A resource guide to effective in-classroom mentoring of and consultation to UPK teachers and teacher aides should be developed and made available to participating UPK school districts, based on "best practices" currently in use in some New York district UPK programs.
- ★ *Recommendation 5:* A study of the demand for and supply of teachers certified to lead UPK classrooms should be carried out in order to determine whether community-based programs eligible to provide UPK services will be able to attract and retain the necessary teaching staff.
- ★ *Recommendation 6:* A study should be undertaken to better understand the relationship between receipt of UPK funds by community-based organizations and their use of parent fees in order to meet the costs of good quality program provision. The findings from that study should be used to develop a policy regarding the extent to which UPK funding is expected to offset the fees paid by parents.

# Introduction

New York's Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK) was established in 1997 with the requirement that school districts contract out at least 10% of their funds to community-based organizations (CBOs) for the provision of direct educational services to children. CBOs include a variety of programs—child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start programs, private schools, preschool special education programs, and group family child care homes. Although a few districts were unable to meet this requirement, generally in rural areas where few options were available, most districts contracted much more than the required 10%, and many even contracted the full amount.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, this was due to space limitations in public school buildings or a desire to reduce costs; however, most school districts have expressed the philosophy that services should be provided by a mix of school- and community-based programs. Over the years, the number of community-based programs and the percentage of UPK children served in community-based programs has increased, with over half of all children in upstate programs and two-thirds in New York City being served by organizations outside the public school system.<sup>5</sup>

Universal Prekindergarten developed in response to a number of challenges and opportunities recognized during the 1990s: the need for more attention to school readiness; welfare reform legislation requiring parents of young children to work and thus obtain child care; and an accumulating body of research demonstrating the long-term benefits of early education to children. In August 1997, a budget compromise was reached that included major expansion of prekindergarten services for all four-year old children throughout the state. This expansion built upon the Experimental Prekindergarten Program already operating in New York State for over thirty years and recent brain research.<sup>6</sup> UPK was contained in a larger proposal that included funding for all-day kindergarten, reduced class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, professional development, technology improvements, and bonding authority for building improvements.

While the focus has been on children, the UPK program has the ability to affect the larger early care and education system, particularly if it is fully implemented to serve all eligible four-year-olds across the state as originally intended. Thus, the need exists to examine the implementation of UPK from the perspective of the local programs to gain a more comprehensive picture. What is the relationship between school districts and the community-based programs? What are the impacts, and what lessons can be learned? In what ways can UPK be improved to better meet the needs not only of children and families, but also of the early childhood programs that provide services?

<sup>4</sup> See S. A. Hicks, K. S. Lekies, and M. Cochran (1999), *Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.

<sup>5</sup> See K. S. Lekies and M. Cochran (2001), *Collaborating for Kids: New York State Universal Prekindergarten 1999-2000*, and K. S. Lekies and M. Cochran (2004), *Continuing the Collaboration: Universal Prekindergarten Expansion in New York State*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.

<sup>6</sup> For information on recent brain research, see R. Shore (1998), *Rethinking the Brain: New Insights into Early Development*. New York: Families and Work Institute.

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## Key Provisions of the Universal Prekindergarten Legislation:

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The statute that established the Universal Prekindergarten program and corresponding regulations consist of the following key provisions:<sup>7</sup>

- Prekindergarten classes for all New York State four-year-olds for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day and no fewer than 180 days per year
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- Attention to support services, parent involvement, assessment, and staff development in UPK plans
- Community collaboration, or contracting out, of at least 10% of UPK funds with organizations outside public school settings, such as child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start, and other community-based agencies, for the purpose of providing direct educational services to children
- Required teacher certification for eligibility to teach in UPK classrooms<sup>8</sup>
- Policy-making power vested in local planning groups and school boards to choose whether to implement a UPK program, and if so, to develop their own separate plans for the delivery of services
- Options of half-, full-, or extended-day services; families retain the choice of whether or not to enroll their children in UPK programs
- Until full implementation, the eligibility of a selected number of districts to participate each year as determined by the State Education Department using a statutory formula based primarily on economic need. An increasing proportion of children will be funded for UPK services during each year of a district's participation until all eligible children whose parents wish to enroll them are being served
- State funding at a minimum of \$2,000 and a maximum of \$4,000 per child
- For the 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 years, a provision that districts must give preference to a certain percentage of children classified as economically disadvantaged; the criteria used by most districts is their free and reduced lunch ratio. The proportion of children served by UPK who are economically disadvantaged must be equal to or greater than the district's free and reduced lunch ratio. However, this was a district decision and some districts chose to use other criteria. This statutory provision sunset on June 30, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Although this requirement was intended to take effect in September 2001, it has been extended to September 2005.



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## Scope of Program

Since its inception, UPK has expanded to serve an increasing number of children in an increasing number of school districts. In its first year, 1998-1999, UPK served approximately 18,000 children in 96 out of 705 districts<sup>9</sup> at a cost of \$60.7 million. Most recently, in 2003-2004, UPK served almost 59,000 children in 221 districts at a cost of \$201.3 million. To date, approximately 264,000 children have received UPK services at an estimated total cost of \$878.2 million.<sup>10</sup> However, UPK has not reached full implementation, and annual expenditures are less than half of the \$500 million figure that was to be allocated by this time. The majority of UPK expansion occurred during the first three years of the program, particularly between years two and three. Since that time, expansion has decreased to a much smaller level in terms of children served and funding.<sup>11</sup>

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## Key Findings of Previous Cornell Early Childhood Program Research Regarding Community-Based Programs

The following findings regarding community-based programs (CBOs) have been noted in previous Cornell Early Childhood Program studies of UPK. These studies used district plans submitted to the State Education Department; surveys with school district UPK coordinators; interviews with school district administrators, UPK coordinators, and teachers; and interviews with child care resource and referral agency directors.<sup>12</sup>

- School district UPK coordinators generally have felt that there should be a balance of school and community sites used for UPK. Most report good to excellent working relationships with CBOs.
- On average, districts have exceeded the 10% minimum contracting requirements, with many districts contracting out the full amount to community-based programs. In 2001-2002, over half of upstate UPK children and two-thirds in New York City were served by community-based programs. Most UPK expansion has occurred in CBOs, with the majority of new sites being added in these programs.
- Day care centers, nursery schools, and Head Start programs are the types of community-based programs used most frequently. Private schools, preschool special education programs, and group family day care homes constitute a small proportion of UPK sites.
- Head Start is used by over 40% of upstate and 70% of New York City districts with Head Start programs, with Head Start staff, sites, staff development, parent involvement programs, support services, transportation, and other resources being utilized for UPK. Many districts included Head Start representation on their advisory boards during the planning stages of UPK.
- The quality of programming, availability of certified teachers, and the availability of space are primary reasons school districts select particular CBO programs. Indeed, the quality of sites has been found to be high when using standardized measures of classroom quality.
- Only a small percentage of upstate districts use multi-year contracts with their community-based programs. They are much more commonly used in New York City, where almost all districts report using them.

<sup>9</sup> In this report, the 32 community school districts in New York City are counted individually. This differs from many State reports that show New York City as a single school district.

<sup>10</sup> Source: New York State Education Department. The figures reported here vary slightly from the ones reported in previous Cornell Early Childhood Program reports. Earlier information was based on state reports that included estimates of expenditures, not final figures.

<sup>11</sup> See Lekies and Cochran, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> See Hicks, et al., 1999; Lekies and Cochran, 2001; 2004; K. S. Lekies and E. H. Heitzman (2001), *Early Care for Infants and Toddlers: Understanding the Broader Impacts of Universal Prekindergarten*; and M. Cochran, F. Schwartz, and S. Watamura (2004), *Implementing Universal Prekindergarten in New York State (Case Study Series)*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.

*...from the perspective of school district representatives, the involvement of community-based organizations (non-school settings) in the delivery of UPK classroom services is generally well received...*

- School-based programs are more likely to have certified teachers, especially in New York City. These programs are also more likely to pay teachers higher salaries. However, community-based programs are more likely to offer extended day programming to better meet the needs of children who require full-day care.
- Over three-quarters of upstate districts and almost all in New York City report holding joint professional development activities for school district and CBO staff.
- Most district UPK coordinators did not indicate difficulty finding community-based sites. Barriers to participation involve staff qualifications, space, amount of funding available, quality of programs, required licenses, location, and an unwillingness of CBOs to participate.
- District coordinators have noticed a moderate degree of change in CBOs in a wide range of areas, including a greater understanding of school district goals for children, curriculum changes, increased participation in staff development activities, and a greater focus on developmentally appropriate practices. They also reported greater insight into the workings of community-based programs, meeting the needs of families, and the collaborative process.
- Districts use direct observations, classroom visits, and meetings most frequently to monitor UPK classroom practices across sites. They employ a number of strategies to ensure consistency from one site to another, such as focusing on curriculum content, scheduling, classroom environments, and common assessment tools.
- Competition for four-year-olds between the school district and CBOs does not appear to be an issue; however concern has been raised that it could become problematic if UPK expands and CBOs are not utilized as resources. A greater concern has been the loss of CBO teachers to district programs due to better salaries and benefits.

In summary, from the perspective of school district representatives, the involvement of community-based organizations (non-school settings) in the delivery of UPK classroom services is generally well received. Their criteria for selecting CBO sites emphasize the quality of programming available, the availability of certified teachers in the sites, and the space available there for expanded prekindergarten provision. School district respondents report having seen a moderate degree of positive change in CBOs as a result of UPK participation, documented usually through visits to classrooms, meetings with staff, and structured observations.

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## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine key areas of UPK implementation from the perspective of the community-based programs that offer UPK services. The directors of all child care centers, private preschools, Head Start programs, nursery schools, group family day care homes, and preschool special education programs providing UPK in the “Wave One” districts were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Wave One districts are those that began UPK in the 1998-1999 year and continued to participate in subsequent years.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> All but three of the Year 1 districts continued into Years 2, 3, and 4.



The set of fifteen basic principles that guided our previous studies also framed this study. These principles were derived from the program requirements specified in the Section 3602-e of Education Law establishing Universal Prekindergarten, the regulations developed to implement the law<sup>14</sup>, and current knowledge of the care and education of young children. They have been organized under six major policy dimensions: Universal access, diversity, collaboration, classroom practices, teacher preparation, and financing.<sup>15</sup> In this study, specific attention has been given to school-community collaboration, teachers, curriculum and programming, financing, and the impacts of UPK on local programs. That list of principles is provided in Appendix B.

<sup>14</sup> Sub-part 151-1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

<sup>15</sup> See Lekies and Cochran (2001 and 2004) for more discussion about these principles.

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# Study Participants & Methods

A survey was developed for use in examining the experiences of community-based programs in the areas of school-community collaboration, teachers, curriculum and programming, financing, and the impacts of UPK on local programs. The survey was distributed at the end of the fourth year of UPK, 2001-2002. This section describes the Wave One districts in which the programs were located, survey components, respondents, and programs.

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## Wave One Districts

In the first year of UPK, 1998-1999, 96 districts offered a UPK program. These consisted of all 32 districts in New York City<sup>16</sup> and 64 districts in other regions of the state, referred to as “upstate districts.” UPK was implemented in all of the large cities as well as very small, rural communities. Since that time, all but a few of the original districts continued to provide UPK each year so that by 2001-2002, the number of Wave One districts still in this study was 94.

It should be noted by 2001-2002, an additional 125 districts offered UPK programs. These districts began UPK in the 1999-2000, 2000-2001, or 2001-2002 school years and were located throughout the state.

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## The Community-Based Program Survey

Through state reports, community-based programs providing UPK during the 2001-2002 year in the Wave One districts were identified. Surveys were sent to the directors of all of these child care centers, private preschools, Head Start programs, nursery schools, group family day care homes, and preschool special education programs ( $N=850$ ) in late spring 2002. Research staff sent follow-up letters and made telephone calls to answer questions and increase response rates.

The survey contained questions that reflected the key areas of interest. Topics included the following:

- Involvement with Universal Prekindergarten
- Reasons for Participation
- Children Served
- District Monitoring Practices
- School-Community Relationships
- Teachers, Staff, and Professional Development
- Curriculum and Programming

<sup>16</sup> At the time of this study, there were 32 community school districts in New York City. Due to restructuring by the Department of Education, there are now 10 regions.

- Parent and Family Involvement
- Financing
- Use of UPK Funds
- UPK Impacts and Evaluation

A copy of the survey is included in Appendix C.

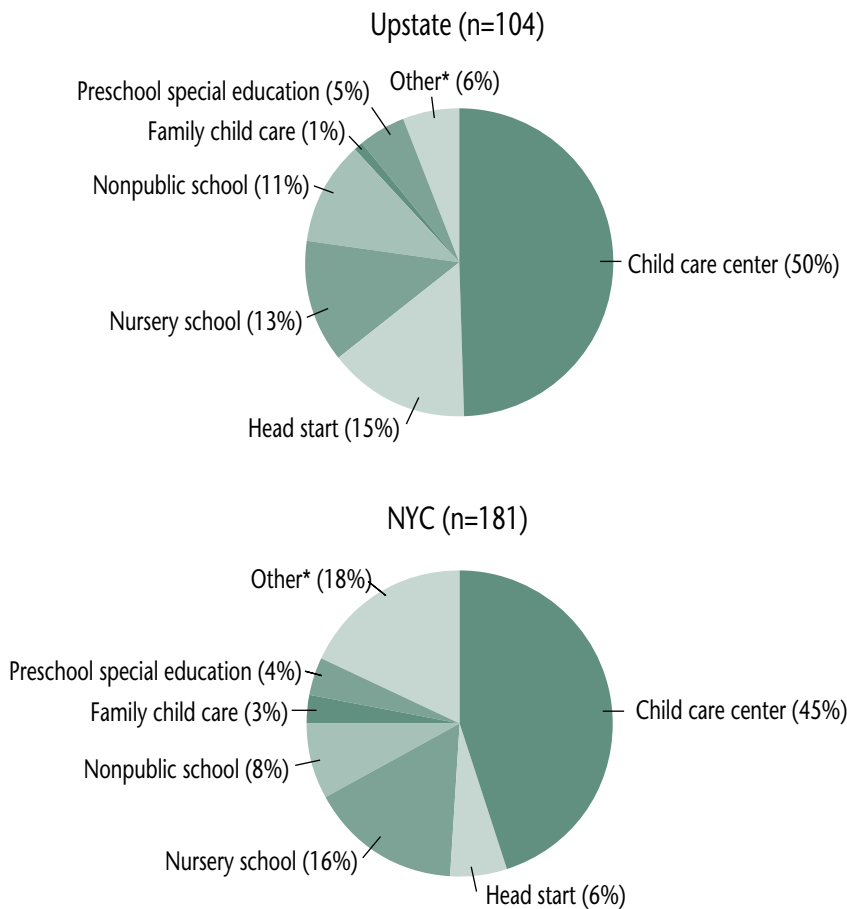
## Survey Respondents and Their Programs

Surveys were returned by 104 of 225 upstate directors (46%) and 181 of 625 New York City directors (29%).<sup>17</sup> The charts below show the distribution of programs by type.

The majority of programs were child care centers, both in upstate and in New York City regions. The programs were in operation for an average of 26 years in upstate areas, with a range from 1 to 106 years, and 22 years in New York City, with a range from 1 to 80 years. The size of responding CBO

<sup>17</sup> In some cases, directors managed multiple sites and may have responded for all of their sites on one survey rather than completing a separate survey for each site. Thus, the response rate may have actually been slightly higher.

### Study Participants by Program Type



\*Other includes programs that are more than one type of program, such as preschool special education and Head Start.

*The programs provided full-day, half-day, and school-day options for families. While some programs offered just half-day or just full-day services, most offered one or more options to better meet the needs of families.*

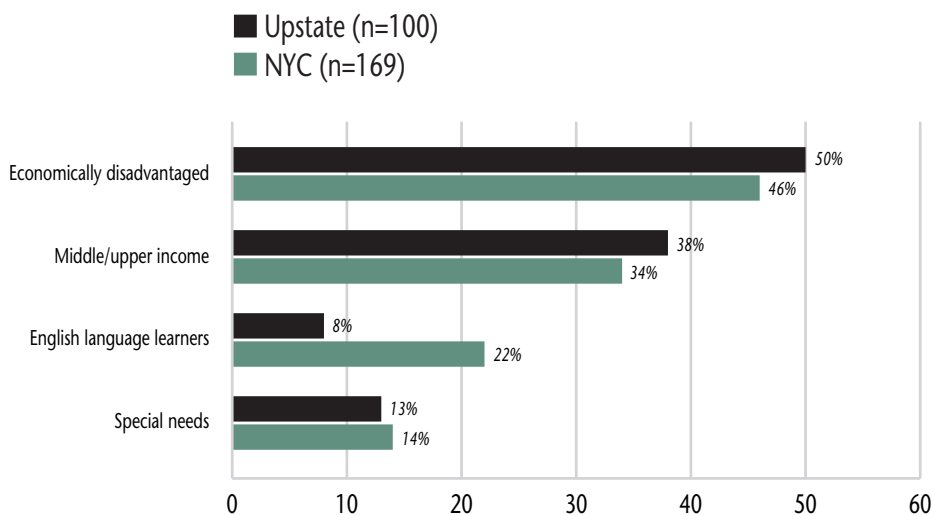
programs also varied. On average, upstate programs served 150 children, with a range from 15 to over 2100, while NYC programs typically served 110, with a range from 11 to 515. This represents all children served, not just those participating in UPK. In addition to preschoolers, about half of upstate programs served infants and two-thirds served toddlers, while in New York City only 11% served infants and 45% served toddlers.

Diversity can be noted among the children served. Approximately half of the children were estimated to be economically disadvantaged, and over one-third were from middle or upper income backgrounds. Directors also reported serving English language learners, particularly in New York City where an average of 22% of children were English language learners. On average, 13-14% of the children were reported to have special needs.

The programs provided full-day, half-day, and school-day options for families. While some programs offered just half-day or just full-day services, most offered one or more options to better meet the needs of families. Between 60% and 70% of programs in both upstate and New York City regions offered full-day care, and a similar percentage offered half-day care. Between 35% and 45% of programs offered programming that lasted the length of the school day, typically 8 or 9 a.m. until 3 or 4 p.m. Over two-thirds of the programs were open year-around.

About 80% of the responding programs had participated in UPK for at least two years, and two-thirds had participated for at least three years. The programs served an average of 33 UPK children in upstate areas and 49 in New York City in 2001-2002.

### Characteristics of Children in Participating programs



# School District-Community Collaboration

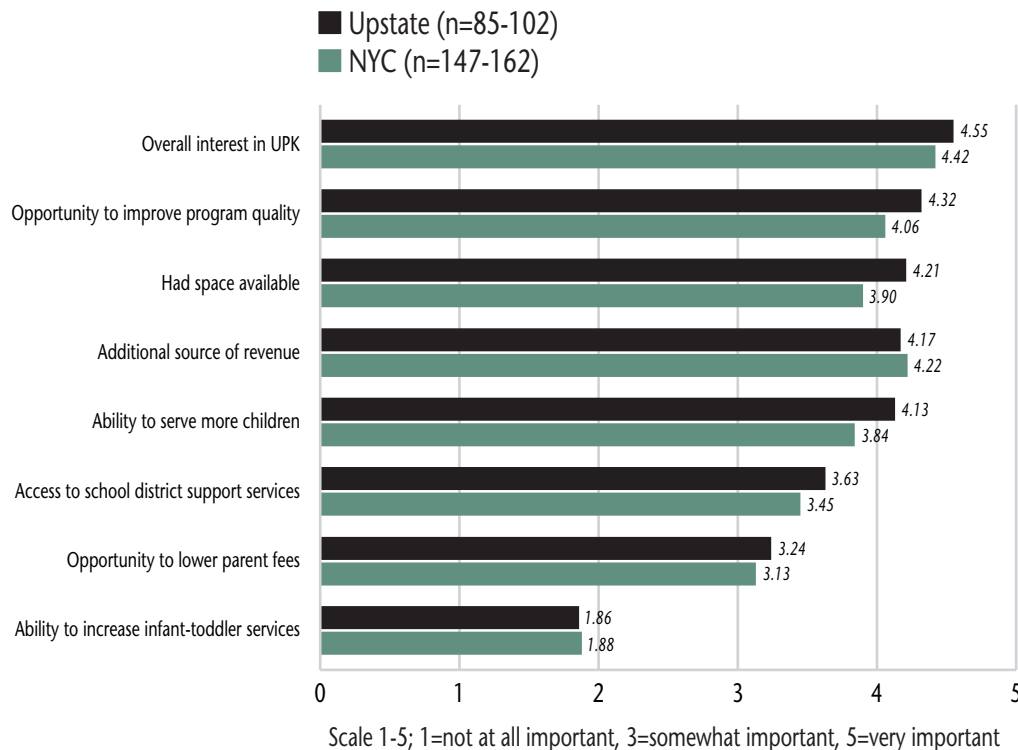
Given the collaborative requirement of UPK, good working relationships between the school district and community-based programs are essential. This chapter addresses a number of questions regarding collaboration: Why did CBO programs decide to become involved in UPK and the public school system? What types of monitoring techniques do districts use, and how do the CBO directors feel about those practices? Do CBOs feel supported or constrained by their school districts? What is the nature of the relationship between CBOs and school districts?

*Given the collaborative requirement of UPK, good working relationships between the school district and community-based programs are essential.*

## Reasons for CBO Participation in UPK

The directors of community-based programs indicated a number of reasons for their decision to participate in UPK. Primary reasons were an overall interest in UPK, the opportunity to improve program quality, having space available, receiving an additional source of revenue, and being able to serve more children. Access to support services offered by the district and the opportunity to lower parent fees were rated as somewhat important. The ability to serve more infants and toddlers did not appear to be an important consideration.

**Reasons for CBO Participation in UPK**



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## School District Monitoring Practices

Because UPK funding flows directly from the State to local school districts which then contract out to community-based programs, local school administrators maintain responsibility for the overall implementation of UPK in their districts. To ensure program quality, districts engage in the monitoring of their various sites. The CBO directors reported site visits and meetings most frequently, with over 70% of upstate directors and 94% of New York City directors indicating these practices. A large majority also indicated the use of telephone calls. E-mail was used much less frequently, by only a small number of directors.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> For more information on district monitoring practices, see Lekies and Cochran, 2004.

*In general, responding directors of community-based UPK programs were satisfied with the nature and extent of district monitoring.*

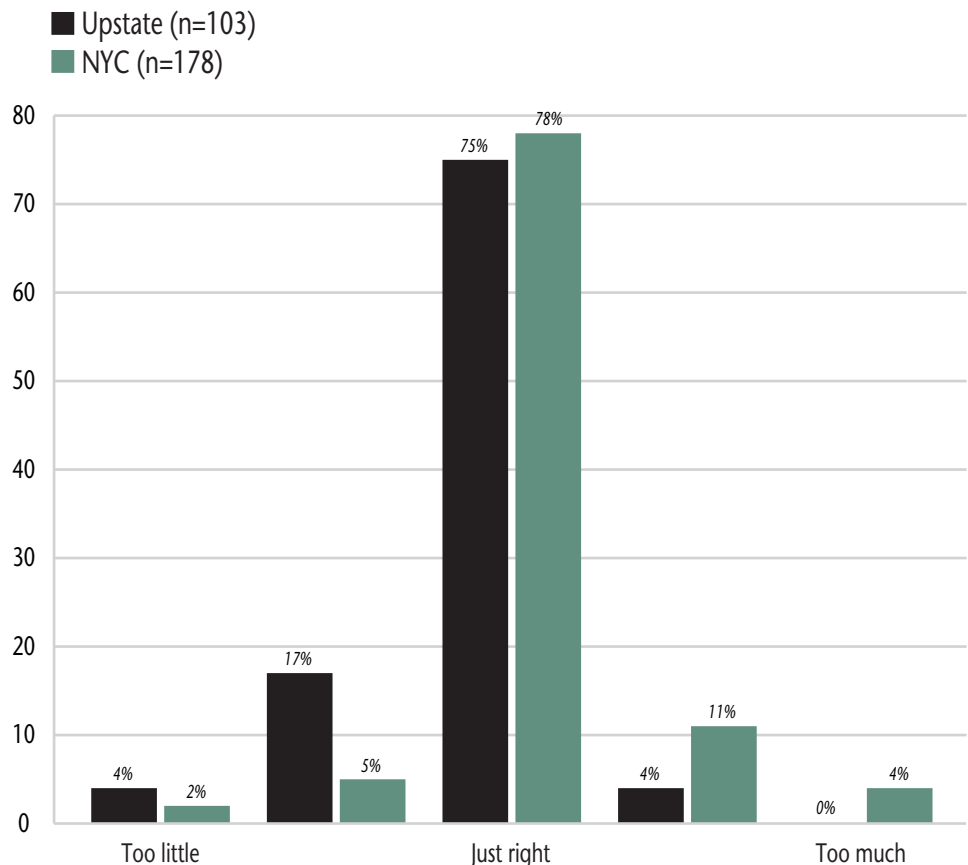
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## CBO Attitudes About Monitoring and Support from the School District

In general, responding directors of community-based UPK programs were satisfied with the nature and extent of district monitoring. Approximately three-quarters of both upstate and New York City directors felt that the amount of monitoring by the school district was “just right.”

The directors felt supported by the school district, with approximately 60% of upstate directors and 70% of those in New York City feeling that the district was highly supportive. Additionally, they did not feel constrained by the school district in the operation of their centers, although respondents in New York City indicated more constraints than those operating

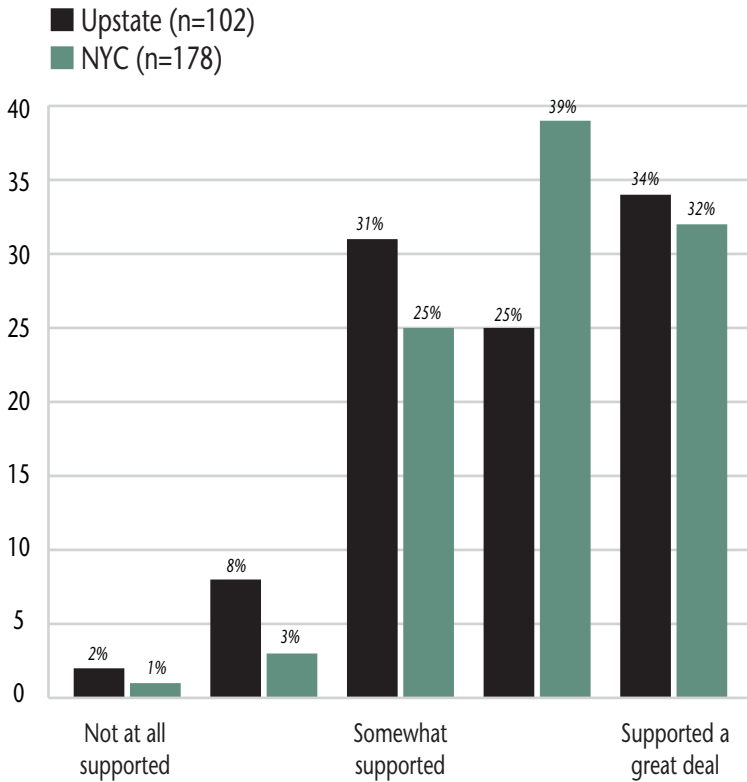
### Amount of District Monitoring



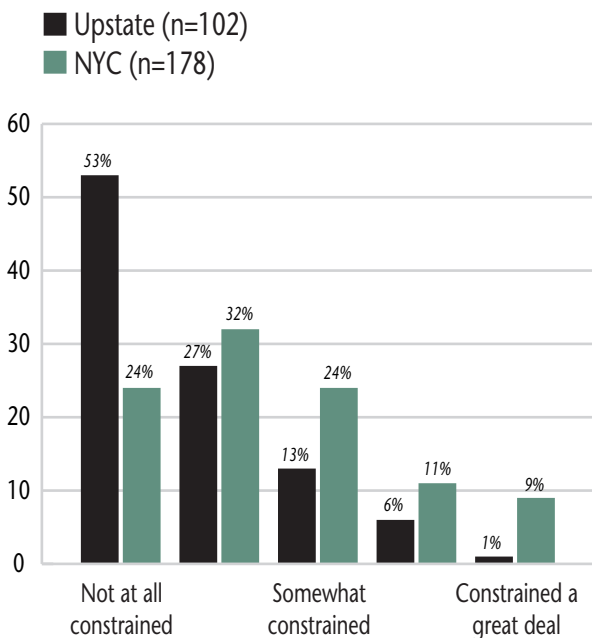
upstate. Eighty percent of upstate and about half of New York City directors indicated little to no constraint from their school districts. Examples of constraints mentioned by programs included transportation, use of space, and differences between centers and the district regarding developmentally appropriate curriculum.

*The directors felt supported by the school district, with approximately 60% of upstate directors and 70% of those in New York City feeling that the district was highly supportive.*

### Perceived Support from School District



### Perceived Constraints from School District

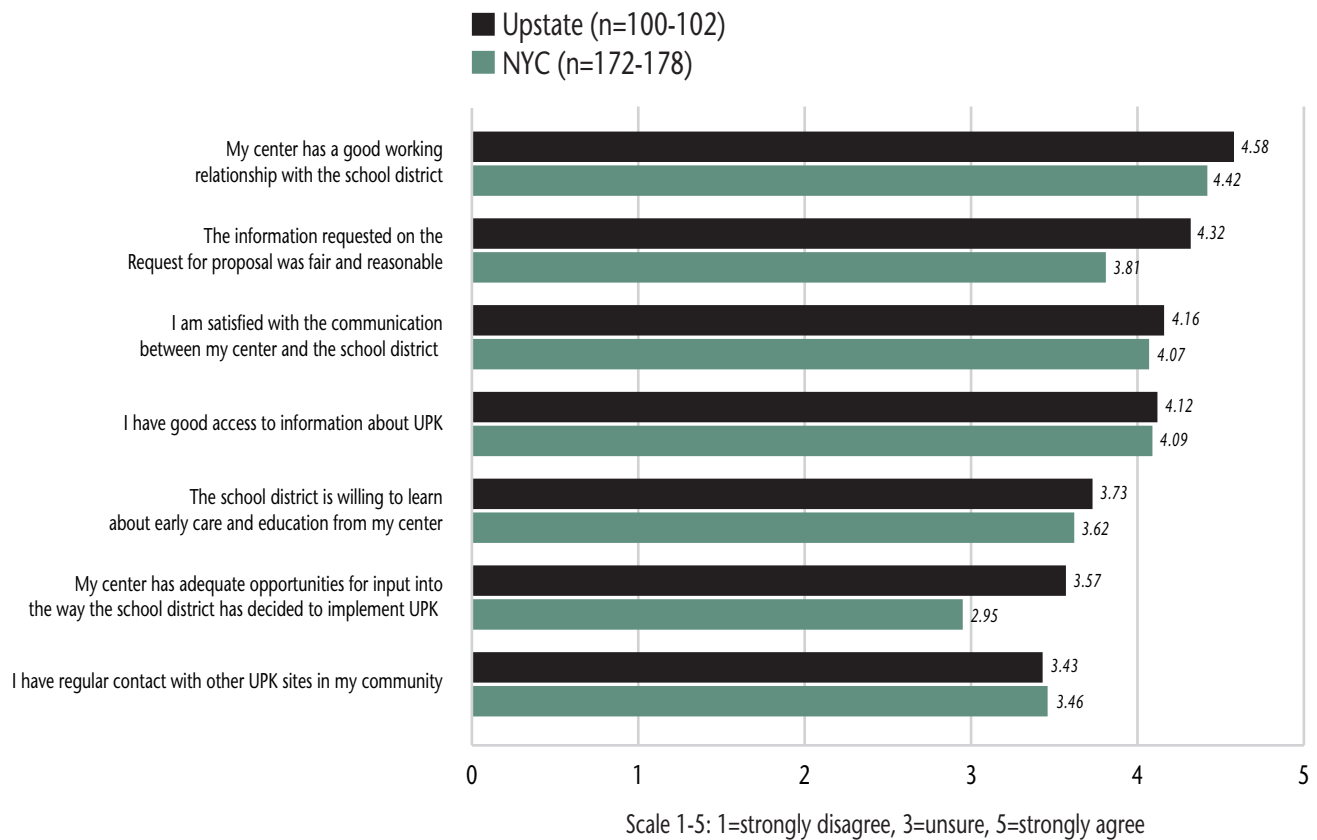


*...directors indicated highly favorable attitudes regarding communication with the school district, having good access to information about UPK, and having a good working relationship with the district.*

## School-Community Relationships

CBO directors were asked about a number of aspects involving their relationships with the school district. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree,” the directors indicated highly favorable attitudes regarding communication with the school district, having good access to information about UPK, and having a good working relationship with the district. They also felt the information requested on the Request for Proposal was fair and reasonable. Rated lower, but still somewhat favorable, was feeling that the district was willing to learn about early care and education from their centers and having regular contact with other UPK sites in the community. Upstate directors also reported feeling they had adequate opportunities for input into the way in which the school district decided to implement UPK. New York City directors indicated more ambivalence about this process.

### School-Community Relationships





# Universal Prekindergarten Teachers

Teacher certification and experience, compensation, supply, and professional development are key issues in the provision of Universal Prekindergarten services. With UPK legislation came the requirement that UPK teachers hold New York State teaching certification. Although the requirement was not in effect when UPK first began in 1998, it was intended to take effect in September 2001. It was postponed several times to the current deadline of September 2005.<sup>19</sup> In addition, previous inquiries into UPK raised concerns regarding salary discrepancies between teachers in public school and community-based sites, competition for teachers, and ongoing professional development needs.<sup>20</sup> This survey sought information about the teachers in UPK classrooms, as well as the attitudes of the CBO directors about certification and professional development opportunities.

## Educational Backgrounds

### Current Levels of Certification and Education

The survey inquired about the educational credentials of all lead teachers of four-year-olds (both UPK and non-UPK teachers), ranging from the Child Development Associate (CDA) to the permanent New York State early childhood/elementary certification which requires a Master's degree. In the upstate region, about one-third of the teachers (31%) had permanent Birth–Grade 2/N–6 certification and an additional 21% had initial or provisional Birth–Grade 2/N–6 certification, which consists of a bachelor's degree in a teacher education program but not full completion of all examinations and graduate level coursework. About 20% had a Bachelor's or Master's degree but no certification. Thirteen percent had an Associate's degree, and 8% had the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. A small percentage had other qualifications, including teacher certification in another area such as special education.

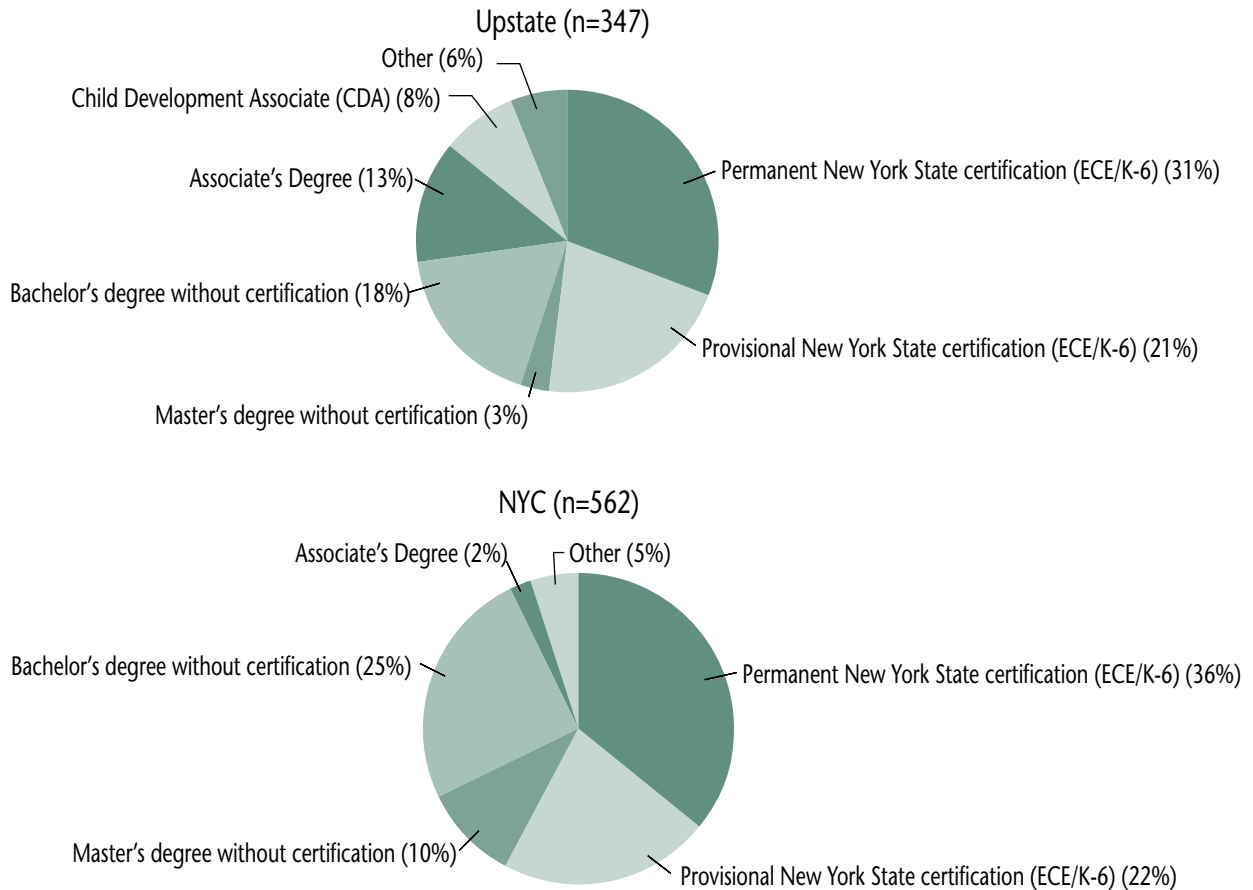
In New York City, the educational background of the lead teachers (both UPK and non-UPK teachers) was somewhat higher. About one-third of the teachers (36%) had permanent Birth–Grade 2/N–6 certification and an additional 22% had initial or provisional Birth–Grade 2/N–6 certification. Thirty-five percent had a Bachelor's or Master's degree but no certification. Only 2% had an Associate's degree, and 5% had other qualifications such as a CDA or other certification. Twenty-one programs indicated that they had teachers enrolled in a study plan, a contractual agreement in New York City in which the teacher specifies a written schedule of courses leading to the certification requirements that will be completed in a specified time period.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> In New York State, the certification for teachers wishing to work with four-year-olds covers Birth–Grade 2. This is a new certification that replaces the former certification that covers nursery school through Grade 6. Both require a Master's degree. It should be noted that teachers with initial or provisional certification are classified as “certified” for state reporting purposes and eligibility for teaching in UPK classrooms. However, these teachers will need to complete all requirements within a certain time period in order to achieve full certification and thus the ability to continue teaching in UPK classrooms.

<sup>20</sup> See Cochran, Schwartz, and Watamura, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Data from final reports submitted by the school districts to the State Education Department provide information on the extent of certification among UPK teachers. Approximately 90% of upstate UPK teachers and 75% of those in New York City were certified at the time the data for this report were collected. See Lekies and Cochran, 2001.

## Lead Teachers' Educational Credentials



### Impacts of UPK on Certification

Forty percent of upstate CBO directors and 54% of those in New York City indicated that one or more of their teachers had become certified, or were in the process of becoming certified, as a result of their participation in the UPK program. In terms of numbers, 14 upstate teachers achieved certification and 23 were in the process out of a total of 347 upstate teachers, or 11% of all teachers. In New York City, 37 achieved certification and 103 were in the process out of a total 562, or 25%.

### Attitudes about Certification

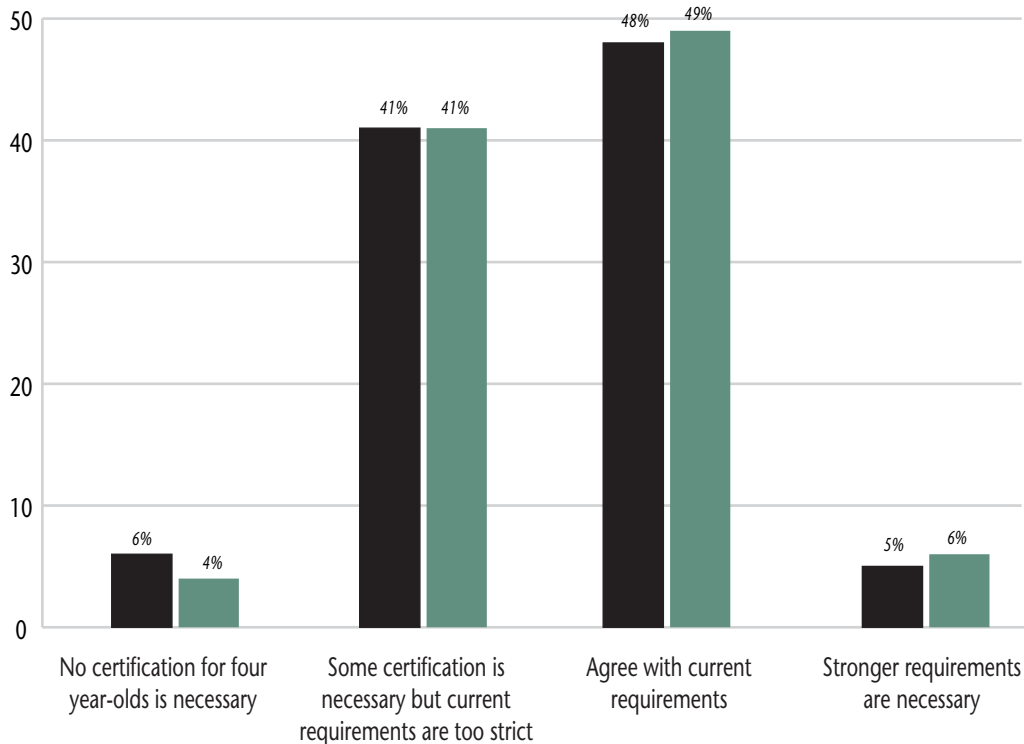
Responding CBO directors in both upstate and New York City areas generally agreed that some level of certification is necessary. Almost half agreed with the current requirements, and another 40% indicated that the current requirements are too strict but some kind of certification is important. Only a small percent indicated that there should be no certification or that stronger criteria than what is currently in force are needed.

### Tenure in Current Employment

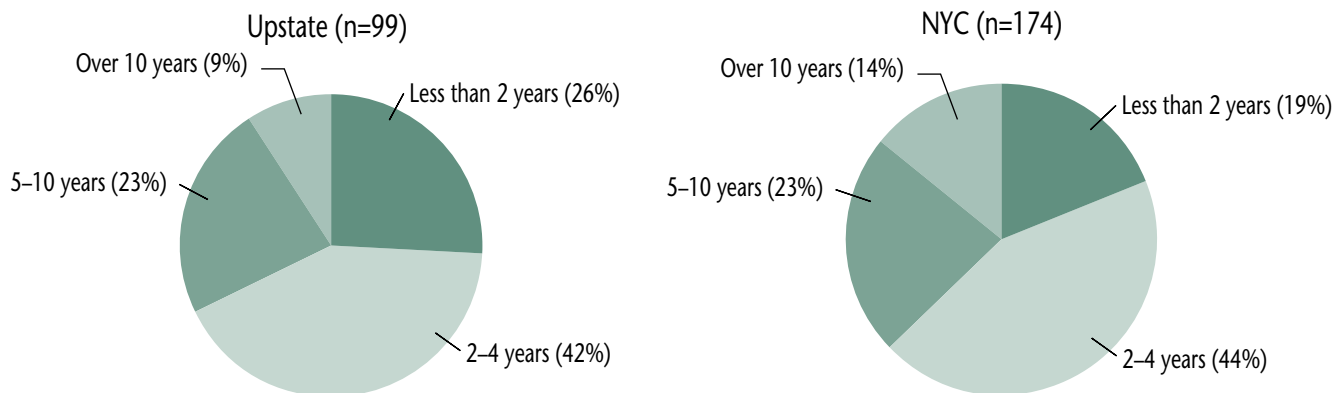
Similar patterns can be noted for teachers in both upstate and NYC regions. When asked about the average length of time that teachers have taught at their particular center, over 60% of directors indicated their teachers had taught less than five years. About 20-25% reported their teachers were there less than 2 years, 40% between 2 and 4 years, and 25% between 5 and 10 years. Less than 15% reported their teachers were there for over 10 years.

### Attitudes about Certification

■ Upstate (n=101)  
 ■ NYC (n=177)



### Tenure in Current Employment



## Teacher Compensation

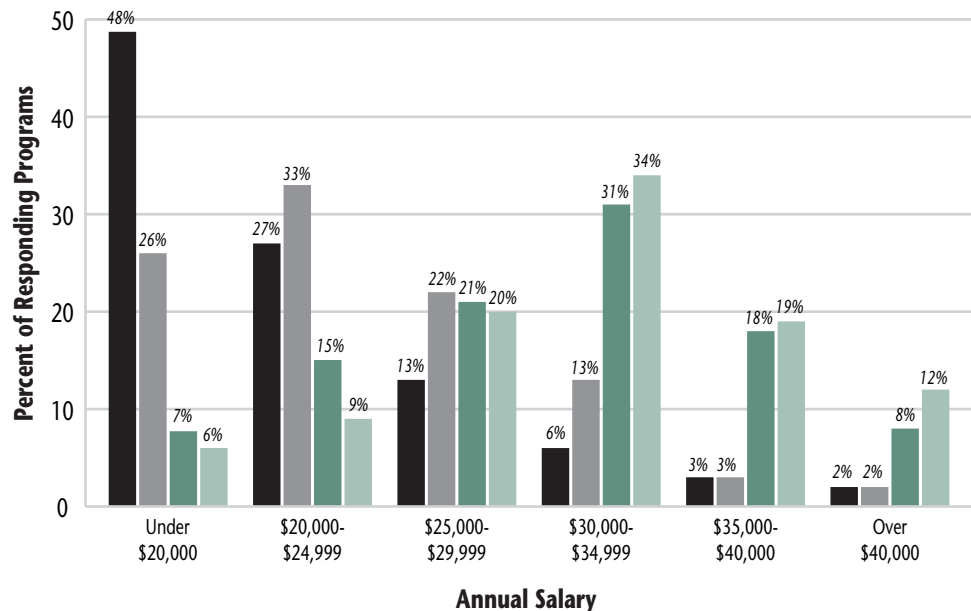
The survey gathered information regarding the salaries and benefits of teachers at the child care centers and other community-based programs. In both the upstate and New York City regions, average salaries of UPK teachers were higher than lead teachers in general (UPK and non-UPK). For all upstate lead teachers, 75% of the directors reported teacher salaries of less than \$25,000 per year. For the UPK teachers only, 59% of directors reported teacher salaries of less than \$25,000 per year. However, only 5% had teachers—either UPK or other lead teachers—who earned over \$35,000 per year.

In New York City, a similar pattern emerged but with higher average salaries reported. Almost 35% of directors reported their UPK teachers earned between \$30,000-35,000 per year, with an additional 20% of directors reporting salaries between \$25,000 and \$29,999, and 19% reporting salaries between \$35,000 and \$40,000. Less than 15% reported earnings either less than \$25,000 or greater than \$40,000.

Many factors influenced the amount that teachers earn, particularly having an early childhood/elementary education certification, a higher level of education, and more years of experience at a center. Other certifications, such as special education, experience with preschool age children, special skills such as working with diverse families, and having a Child Development Associate credential were mentioned by a much smaller percentage of directors. Whether or not the teachers serve UPK children was reported as a factor by only 25% of the upstate and 20% of New York City directors, suggesting that the reason UPK teachers are earning more is due to certification, education, and possibly more experience at a center rather than the classification of the children served.

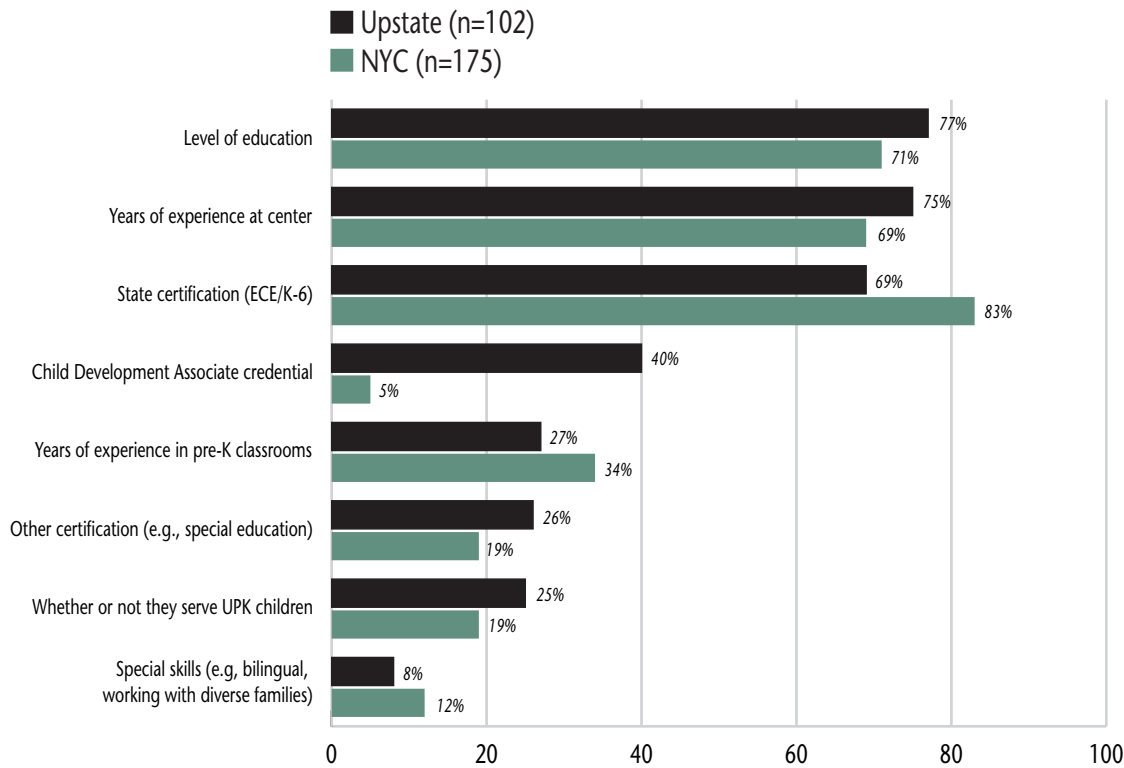
### Average Teacher Compensation

- Upstate: All Lead Teachers (UPK and non-UPK) (n=99)
- Upstate: UPK Teachers (n=99)
- NYC: All Lead Teachers (UPK and non-UPK) (n=169)
- NYC: UPK Teachers (n=169)

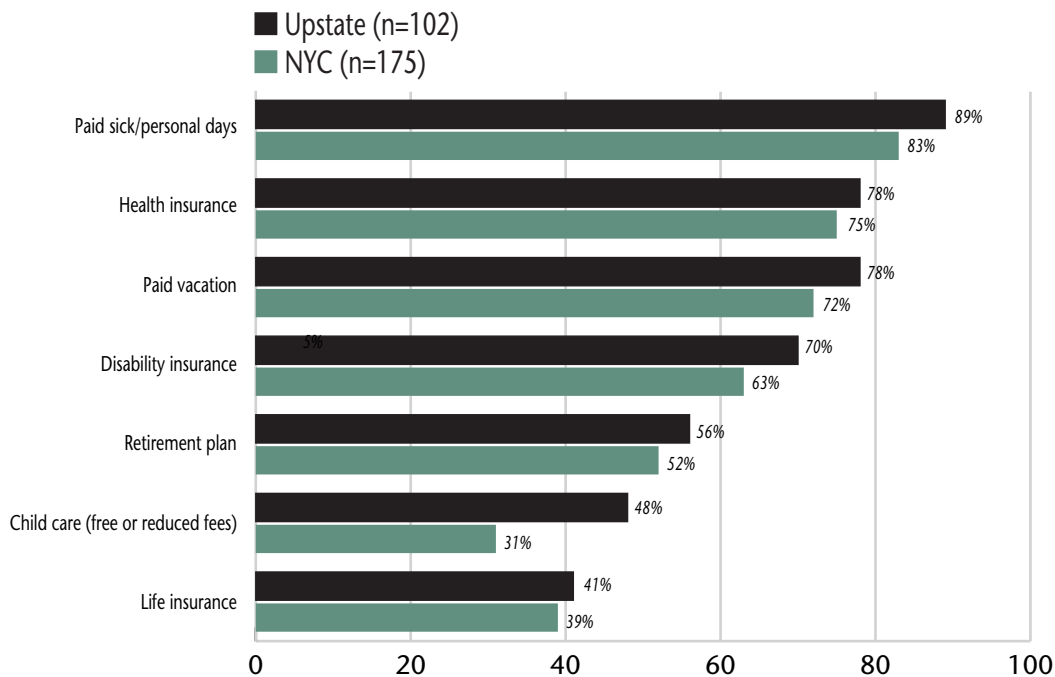


CBO directors indicated that their teachers received a number of fringe benefits. Similar findings could be noted for teachers in upstate as well as New York City regions. Paid sick and personal days, health insurance, and paid vacation were mentioned most frequently, by 70% or more of responding directors. Disability insurance was mentioned by 60-70% of directors. Retirement, life insurance, and free or reduced fees for child care were offered by about one-third to one-half of programs.

### Factors Influencing Teacher Salaries



### Fringe Benefits



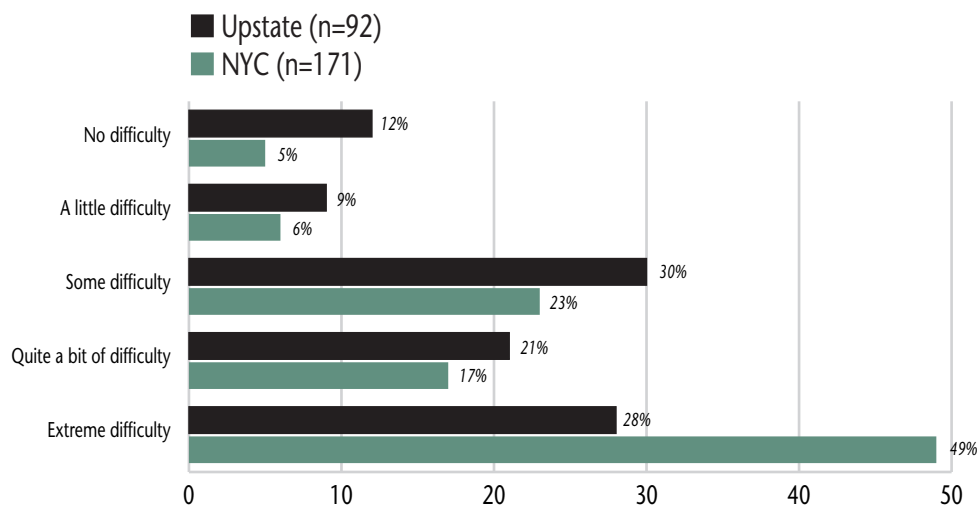
*Retention of teachers is another important concern in the implementation of UPK, particularly in light of competing opportunities for certified teachers in the local school district.*

## Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Many directors felt there was a shortage of early childhood/K-6 teachers in their communities. Forty percent of upstate and over 80% of New York City directors indicated this was the case. Furthermore, CBO directors reported having some difficulty finding certified teachers to teach in their programs. Over 75% of upstate and almost 90% of New York City directors indicated at least some difficulty, with approximately one-quarter of upstate and half of New York City directors having extreme difficulty. Primary reasons were financial—lower salaries and fewer fringe benefits than those offered by school districts. Other reasons included longer hours, a longer calendar year, half-day programs, teacher shortages, lack of preschool experience, lack of the right educational credentials, location of centers, student population, and lack of awareness of job opportunities.

Retention of teachers is another important concern in the implementation of UPK, particularly in light of competing opportunities for certified teachers in the local school district. Sixteen percent of the upstate directors and 20% of those in New York City indicated that some of their teachers transferred into school district positions during the 2001-2002 school year. This represents a total of 17 upstate teachers and 42 in New York City. Primary reasons were higher salary and benefits rather than dissatisfaction at their current centers.

### Difficulty Recruiting UPK Teachers

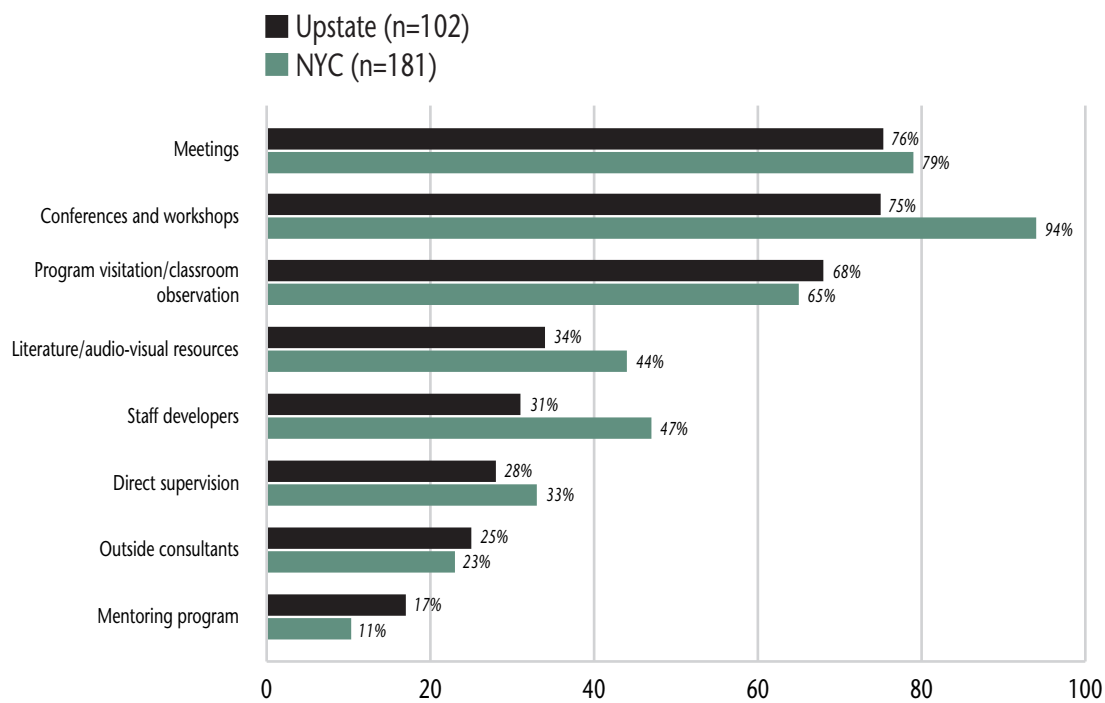


## Professional Development

CBO directors were asked a series of questions regarding participation in district-sponsored professional development activities. Mentioned most frequently were meetings, conferences and workshops, and program visitation and classroom observations. One-quarter to one-half of programs utilized literature/audio-visual resources, staff developers, direct supervision, and outside consultants. A small number of programs participated in a district-sponsored mentoring program.

In addition, directors suggested other types of professional development activities that would be helpful. These included workshops on curriculum development and parent communication and a forum for UPK programs to exchange information.

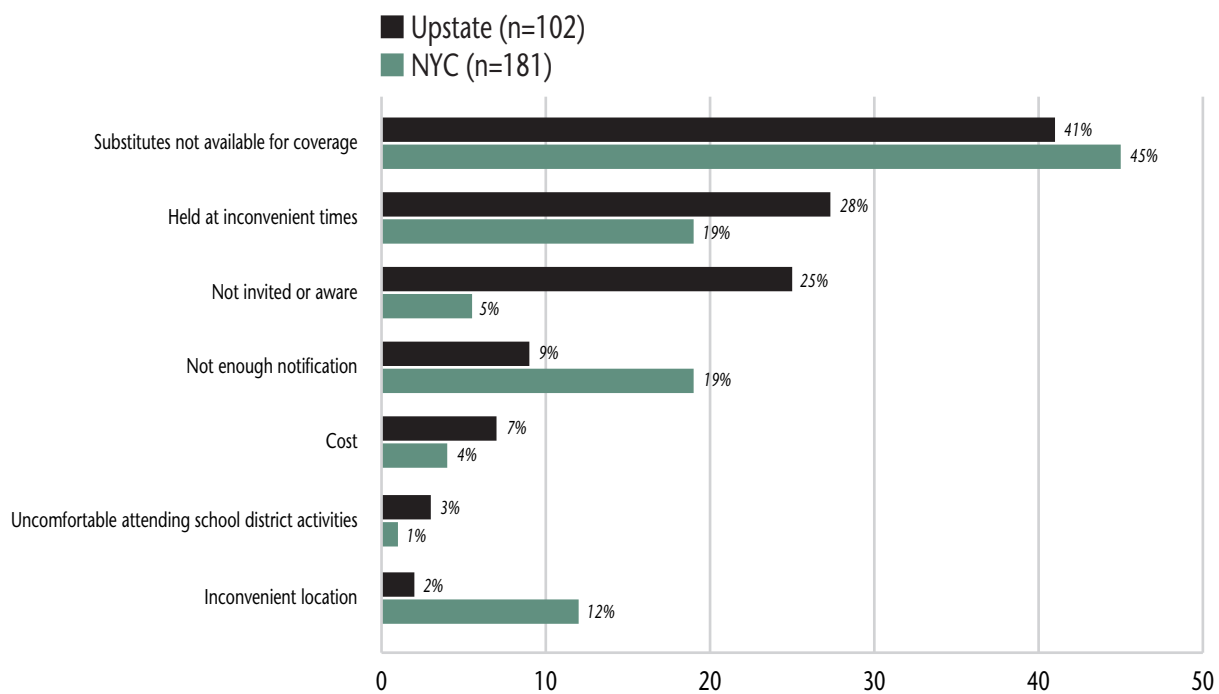
### Professional Development Activities Utilized by CBOs Participating in UPK



Participating in these activities were program directors and administrators, as well as teachers serving UPK children. In many programs, assistant teachers and aides also took part. Teachers not serving UPK were not included as frequently, with less than 20% of the directors reporting their participation.

Despite the high participation rates, barriers often got in the way of taking part in professional development opportunities, particularly those located away from the centers where teachers worked. The biggest barrier, mentioned by over 40% of directors, was that substitutes were not available for coverage. About one-quarter of the upstate directors mentioned inconvenient times or not being invited or aware. About 20% of New York City directors mentioned not having enough notification or inconvenient times. Only a few mentioned feeling uncomfortable attending school district activities.

### Barriers to Participation in Staff Development Activities





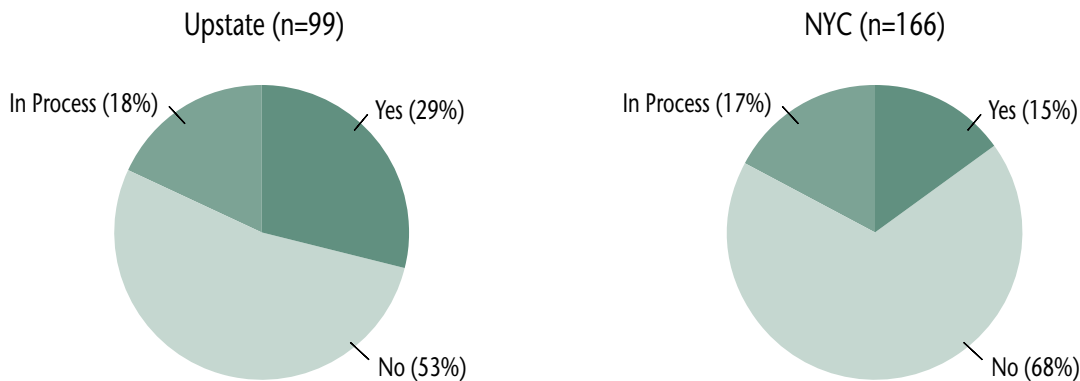
# Curriculum & Programming

Of highest priority is the ability of Universal Prekindergarten programs to meet the needs of the children and families they serve and to provide a high quality learning experience. This chapter addresses issues of curriculum and programming offered by community-based programs. Program accreditation, curriculum, meeting the needs of children with disabilities or who are English language learners, transition to kindergarten activities, and family involvement are topics covered.

## Accreditation

Many of the programs offering UPK are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In the upstate areas, 29% of the responding programs were accredited, with another 18% in process of receiving accreditation. In New York City, 15% were accredited and 17% were in process of receiving accreditation.

**Percent of Responding Programs with NAEYC Accreditation**



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## Curriculum

In upstate areas, one-third of the directors indicated that the curriculum they used was required by the school district. This was the case in almost half (49%) of New York City programs.

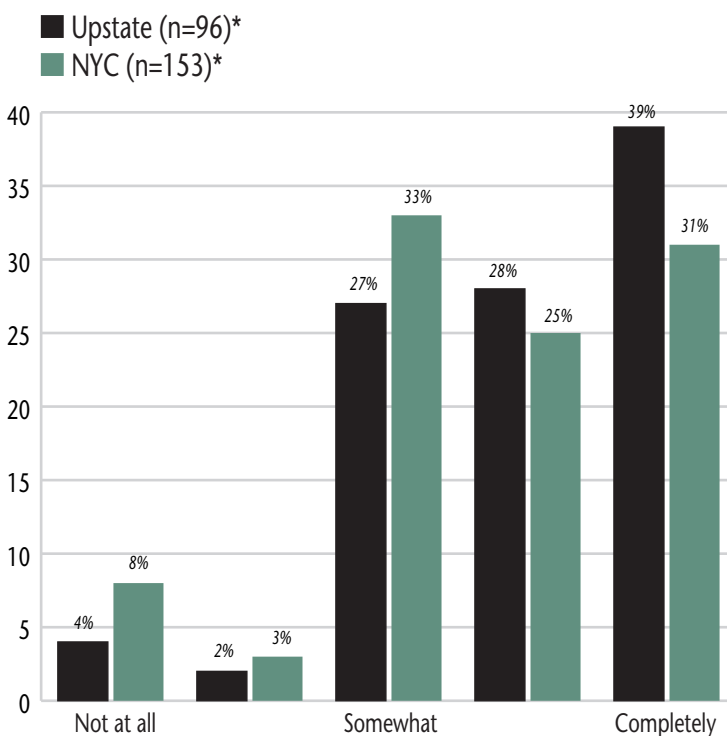
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## Meeting the Needs of Children

The survey inquired whether programs were able to meet the needs of children with disabilities, as well as for those who are English language learners. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1="not at all" and 5="completely," upstate programs averaged 3.68 for meeting the needs of children with disabilities, indicating that they could meet the needs of these children fairly well. The average in New York City was 3.25, a slightly lower score. Approximately 90% of the districts indicated they could meet their needs at least "somewhat" or better. Only a small percentage reported they could not meet their needs at all.

Reasons for difficulties focused on the physical environment of the centers, staffing, and the special services required by children. Many commented that their buildings were not accessible for children with physical disabilities, the teachers did not have the necessary understanding of particular disabilities, they needed additional staff, and the teachers did not have enough time to meet with specialists. Others mentioned the severity of children's emotional and behavioral problems, and the amount of time needed for evaluations and services to be arranged. In addition, a few commented on difficulties working with parents.

### Meeting the Needs of Children with Disabilities

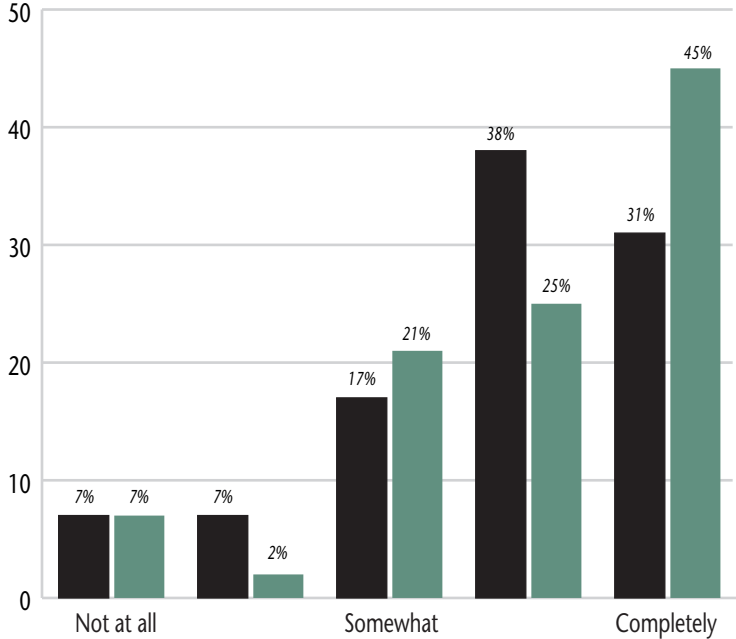


\*A number of programs indicated that this question did not apply to their program and therefore they were excluded from this analysis.

For English language learners, the upstate programs reported an average score of 2.79, indicating they could meet the needs of these children only somewhat. In New York City, the average score was 3.59, a considerably higher score than the upstate programs. Over 80% of programs could meet the needs of English learners fairly well or completely; however, some programs indicated they did have difficulty. These difficulties generally involved needing money for speech therapy and special services, the staff not speaking the same language as children and parents, and needing more staff training.

**Meeting the Needs of Children Who Are English Language Learners**

■ Upstate (n=75)\*  
 ■ NYC (n=159)\*



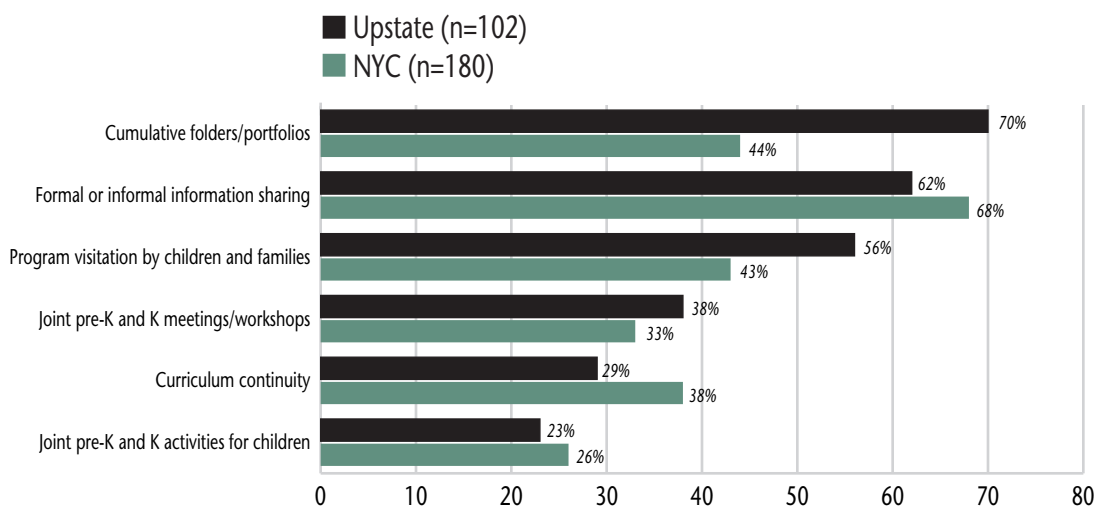
\*A number of programs indicated that this question did not apply to their program and therefore they were excluded from this analysis.

*UPK legislation encourages programs to organize activities for family involvement.*

## Transition to Kindergarten Activities

The program directors reported a number of activities in place to ease the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten. For upstate programs, cumulative folders and portfolios were used most frequently, by 70% of the programs, followed by formal or informal information sharing (62%), and program visitation by children and families (56%). Joint pre-K and kindergarten meetings and workshops for teachers and staff, curriculum continuity, and joint pre-K and kindergarten activities for children were used by between 20% and 40% of programs. Similar findings were noted for New York City, except that cumulative folders and portfolios and program visitation were used by just over 40% of programs.

### Transition to Kindergarten Activities

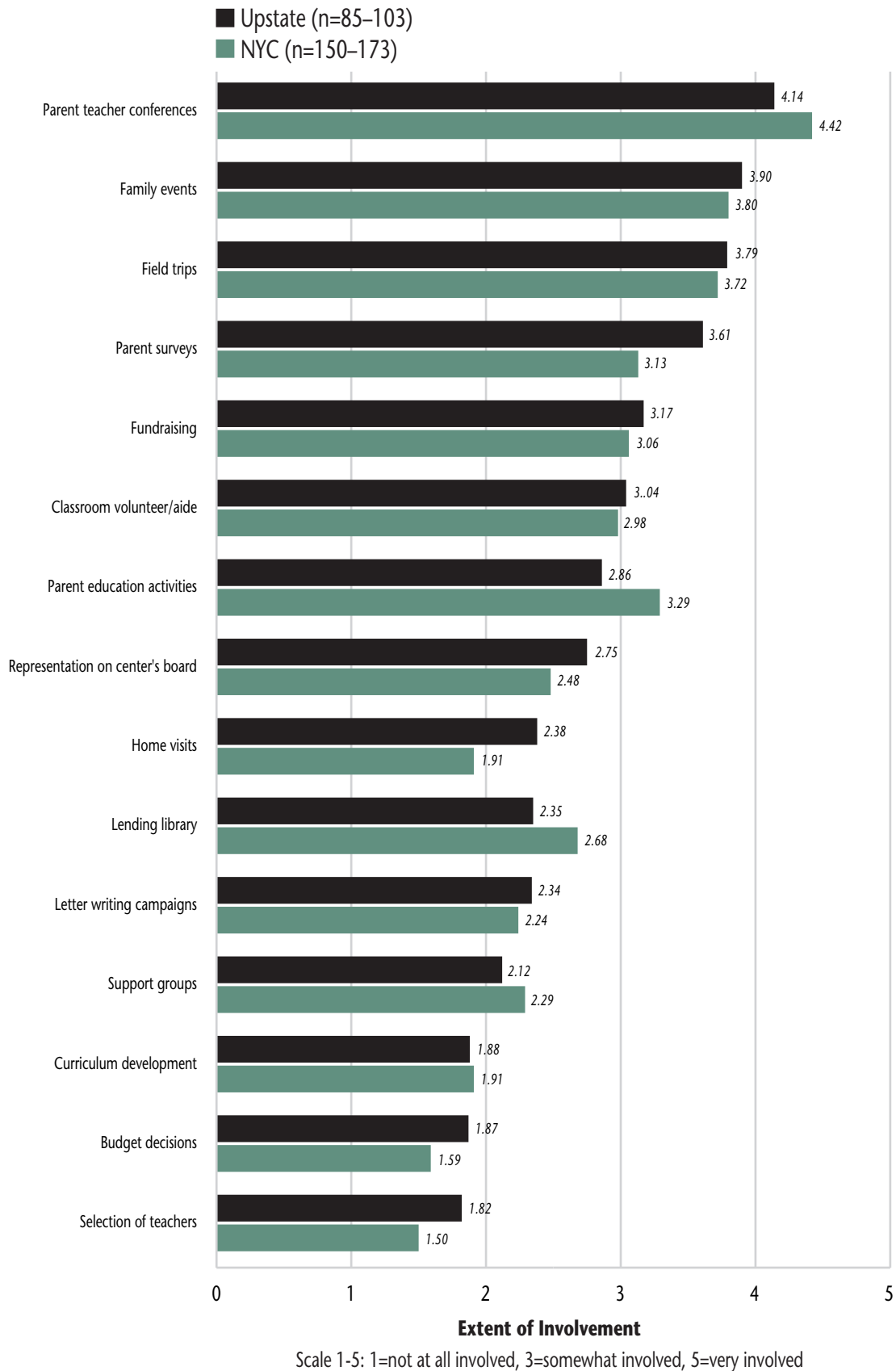


*Most commonly mentioned activities, by both upstate and New York City directors, were parent teacher conferences, family events, and field trips.*

## Family Involvement in UPK

UPK legislation encourages programs to organize activities for family involvement. Using a scale from 1-5, with 1=not at all involved, 3=some-what involved, and 5=very involved CBO directors were asked the extent to which families are involved in the various types of activities at their centers. Most commonly mentioned activities, by both upstate and New York City directors, were parent teacher conferences, family events, and field trips. Moderate levels of involvement were noted in parent surveys, fundraising, serving as a classroom volunteer/aide, and parent education activities. Activities with low levels of involvement were those that engaged parents in major decision-making and programming activities: curriculum development, budget decisions, and selection of teachers. In New York City, home visits also were mentioned infrequently.

## Family Involvement in UPK



# Financing

*The directors of community-based early childhood programs in this study reported that they received funds from a multitude of sources. UPK funding played a major role, constituting an average of almost one-quarter to one-third of total revenues.*

<sup>22</sup> The amount that a school district pays to a community-based UPK site is a contractual issue between the agency and the district. Other than the requirement that a minimum of 10% of UPK funds be allotted to CBO sites, there are no other regulations. However, the State Education Department assesses the adequacy of the amount of payment to CBOs as part of its application review.

The vast majority of community-based preschool programs in New York receive funding from multiple sources, including parent fees, the state and/or federal government, and specialized subsidy programs such as the USDA Food Program. With UPK legislation, a new funding source was introduced. This chapter discusses the costs of providing services, sources of funding, amount of UPK funding received, the adequacy of this funding and district payment schedules, and multiyear contracts. Furthermore, the uses of these funds by community-based programs are described.

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## The Overall Cost of Early Education and Care

Directors were asked to estimate what the total cost of enrolling a child in full-day care for a four-year-old would be without UPK funding. Upstate directors reported an average weekly cost of \$140 compared to New York City's reported average cost of \$189 per week. If annualized, or multiplied by 52 weeks, these reported weekly expenditures generate costs per child per year of \$7,280 in the upstate programs and \$9,828 in New York City.

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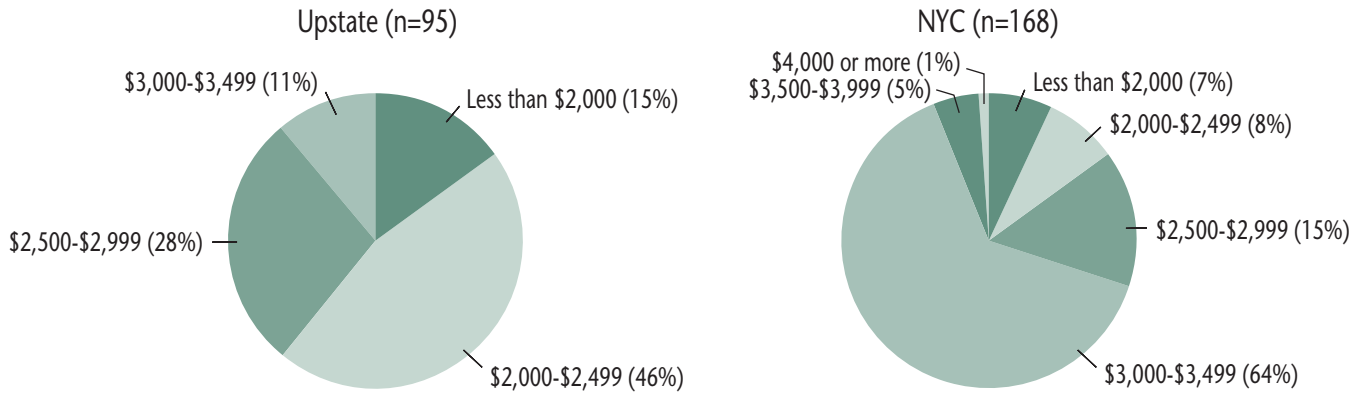
## Amount of UPK Funding Per Child

Programs received varying amounts from their local school districts for the provision of UPK services. This is not the amount of money allocated to the school district overseeing UPK from the State, but rather the portion of that funding passed on to the community-based programs delivering UPK services.<sup>22</sup> Programs reported a range of less than \$2000 to over \$4000 per child. In upstate areas, almost half the programs (46%) received between \$2000 and \$2499 per child, with an additional 28% receiving between \$2500 and \$2999, and 11% receiving over \$3000. About 15% received less than \$2000.

In New York City, about two-thirds of programs (64%) received between \$3000 and \$3499. Thirty percent received less than this, and 6 percent received more. Two programs received over \$4000.

Using the midpoint of the range selected by each CBO director as an estimate of the funding received per child, an average amount per child was calculated. This amount was \$2460 for the upstate programs and \$3041 for those in New York City. Based on the overall cost of care figures reported above, this means the UPK funding provided about 34% of the total funding for a full-day program in the upstate region and 31% of the total funding for an equivalent program in New York City.

### Amount of UPK Funds per Child



The following table presents an additional analysis of funding based on amount and location. Collapsing the various levels of UPK funding into two categories (less than \$3,000 per child per year and greater than \$3,000 per child per year), almost all upstate programs received less than \$3000 and most New York City programs received \$3000 or more.

#### UPK Funding by Category and Location

UPK Funding Level	Upstate Community-Based UPK Programs	NYC Community-Based UPK Programs
Less than \$3,000 per child per year	89%	30%
\$3,000 per child per year or more	11%	70%

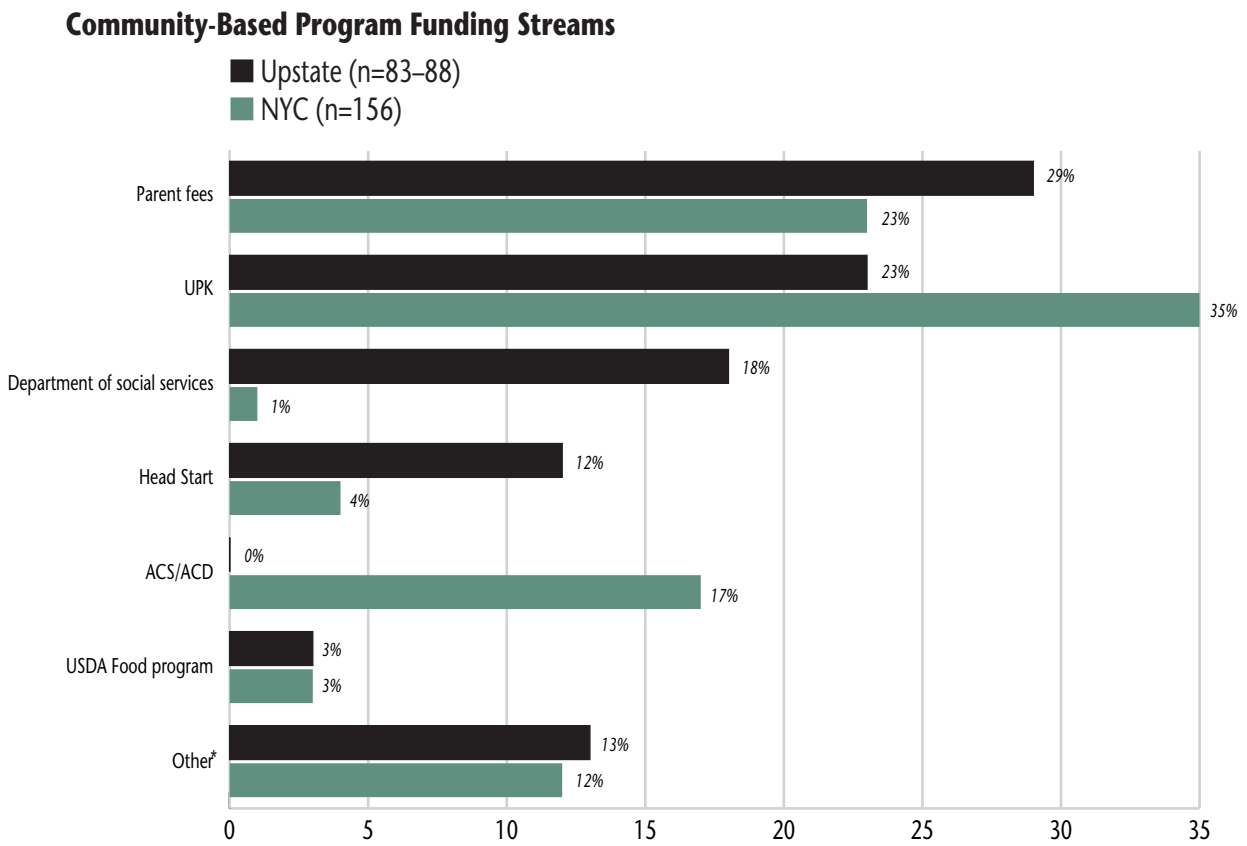
### The Significance of UPK as a Funding Source

The directors of community-based early childhood programs in this study reported that they received funds from a multitude of sources. UPK funding played a major role, constituting an average of almost one-quarter to one-third of total revenues. Parent fees provided approximately the same amount of income, and together with UPK funding they made up more than half of community-based UPK program financing in the 2001-2002 school year. It is important to note that UPK funds and parent fees both play significant roles in the financing picture because UPK only covers two and a half hours of the programming day whereas most of these programs serve children for a longer period.

<sup>23</sup> Combining the annual per child cost data reported earlier with the average UPK allocation received by the reporting centers, it is possible to check the internal consistency of the financial data provided by respondents. For instance, if we assume that community-based programs (not including Head Start programs) received \$3,000 a year in UPK funding per child, and that made up an average of 29% of total funding for those programs, then total program cost should have been about \$10,345. New York City directors reported that total as about \$9,828 (extrapolated from cost per week data), suggesting that their responses are reasonably consistent across data points.

Additionally, monies from the Administration for Children’s Services/Agency for Child Development were important for programs in New York City, amounting to 17% of programs’ total funding. For upstate programs, the county Department of Social Services funding was substantial, providing 18% of program funding. Funds from these two sources are portable subsidies paid to the programs on behalf of low-income families, in lieu of parent fees.<sup>23</sup>

The following chart shows the sources of funding received by the programs, as a percentage of total income.



\*Note: Other includes non-profit organizations, United Way programs, churches, fundraising efforts, State Education Department, special education programs, and other sources.

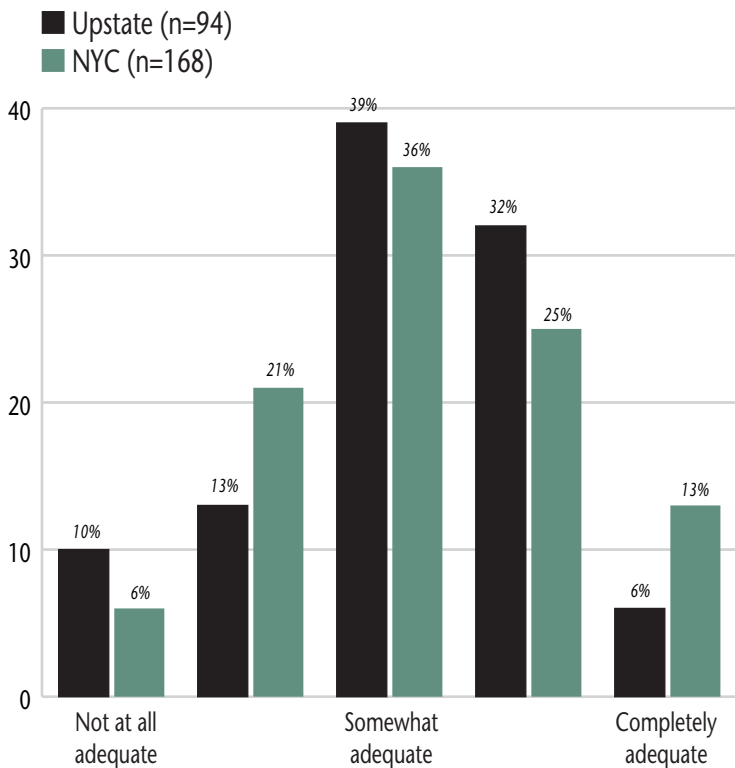


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## Perceived Adequacy of UPK Funding

Directors were asked the extent to which the funding received from the school district met their programming needs. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1=not at all adequate and 5=completely adequate, upstate directors gave an average rating of 3.13 and New York City directors gave an average rating of 3.17, indicating that the funding was somewhat adequate. Six percent of upstate and 13% of New York City directors felt it was completely adequate, while 10% of upstate directors and 6% of those in New York City felt it was not at all adequate.

### Perceived Adequacy of UPK Funding

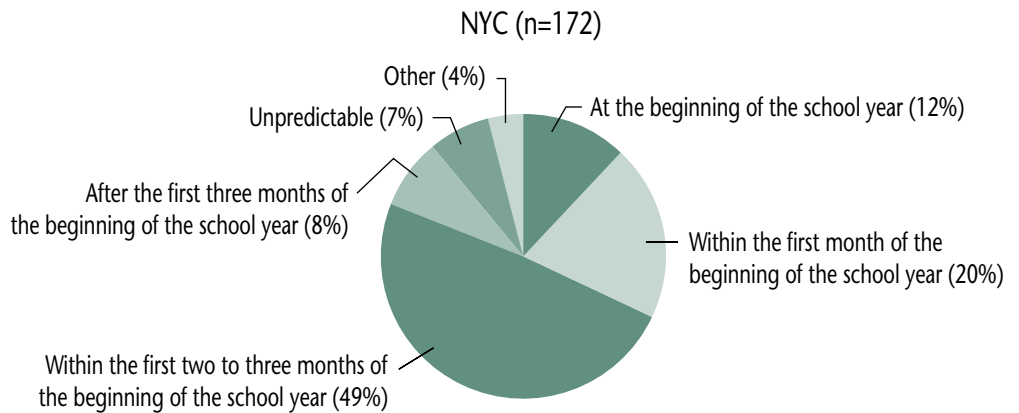
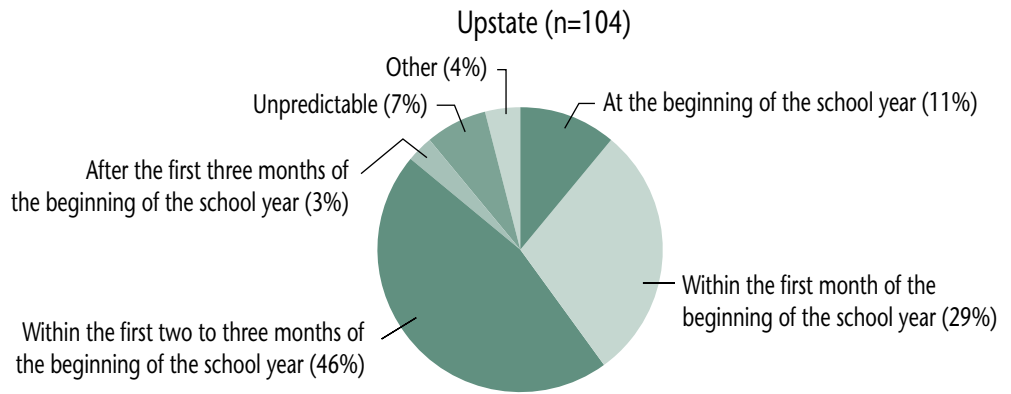


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## Schedule of Payments

Program directors were asked when they received payment from the school district for providing UPK services. The majority of upstate respondents received payment by the first three months of the school year, with about 10% receiving payment right at the beginning of the year, about 25% within the first month, and about half within the first two or three months. Similar responses were noted for New York City programs. About 7% of directors in both regions indicated that funding was unpredictable. Most felt this schedule was adequate, although about 15% of upstate and 22% of New York City directors indicated that it was not at all or only slightly adequate.

## Receipt of Payment for UPK from School District



*Overall, they felt these arrangements were quite beneficial to them, with only a few directors indicating that the use of multi-year contracts was not at all or only slightly beneficial.*

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### Multi-year Contracts

Only about 15% of upstate directors indicated the use of multi-year contracts with their school districts; however, they are much more common in New York City where over 80% of programs had this type of arrangement. The length of time for these contracts ranged between two and five years. Overall, they felt these arrangements were quite beneficial to them, with only a few directors indicating that the use of multi-year contracts was not at all or only slightly beneficial.

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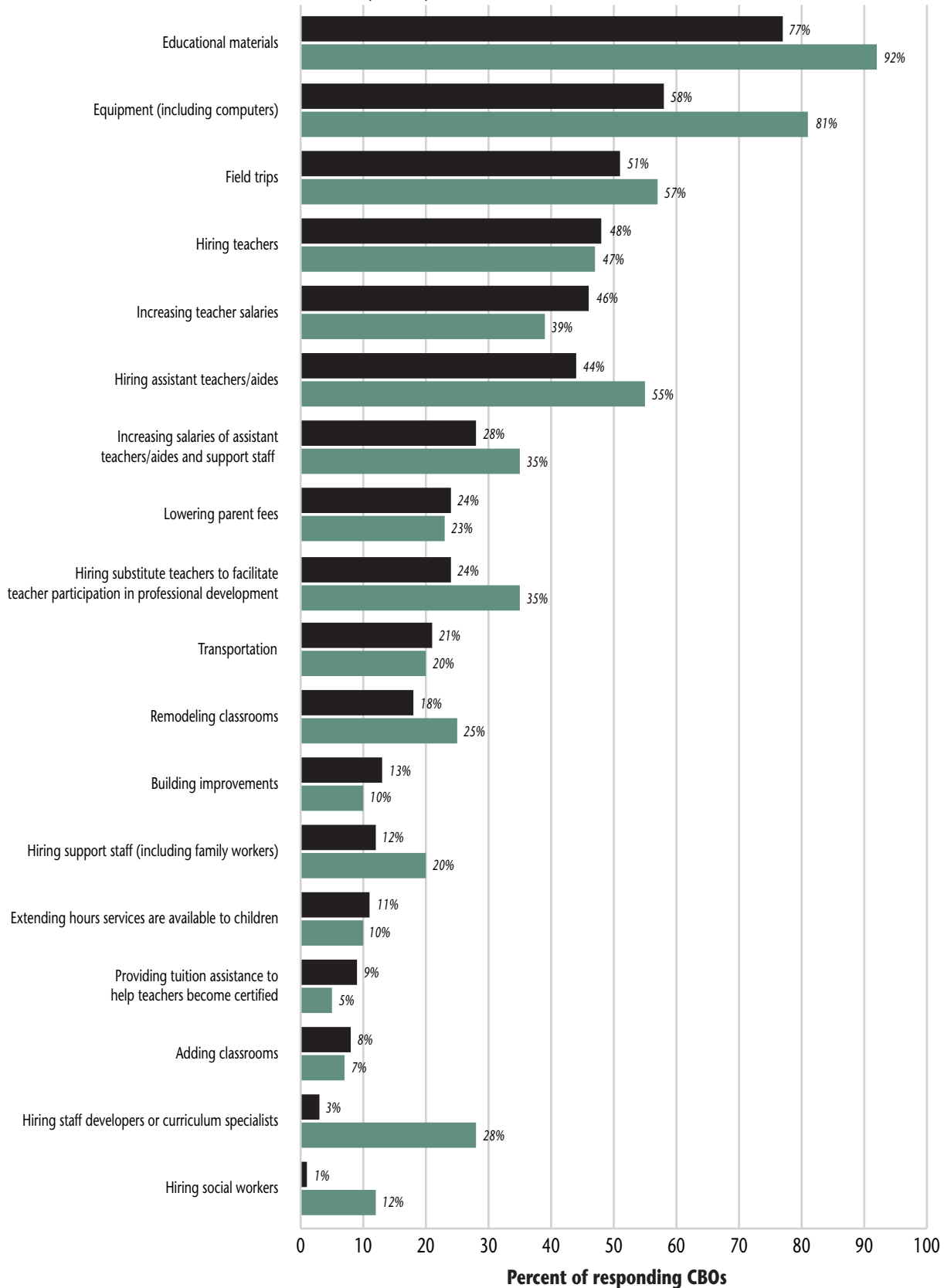
### Use of UPK Funds

Of interest is the manner in which programs utilized the UPK funds they received. For upstate programs, the most common use of funds was for educational materials; this was reported by over three-quarters (77%) of the programs. This was followed by equipment and field trips, which were reported by over half of the programs. Between 40% and 50% of programs used funds for hiring teachers, increasing teacher salaries, and hiring assistant teachers and aides. Approximately 20% to 30% used funds for increasing the salaries of assistant teachers and aides, lowering parent fees, hiring substitutes to allow teachers to participate in professional development opportunities, and transportation.

## Use of UPK Funds

■ Upstate (n=102)

■ NYC (n=178)



Funds were used in similar ways in New York City programs with a few exceptions. A greater percentage of programs reported using funds for educational materials, equipment, remodeling classrooms, and personnel. This included hiring assistant teachers and aides, increasing salaries of assistant teachers and aides, hiring substitutes, hiring support staff, hiring staff developers and curriculum specialists, and hiring social workers. Increasing teacher salaries was reported slightly less often than in the upstate areas.

Further analysis indicates that the level of UPK funding was linked to certain program expenditures. Using the two general categories of funding shown previously (less than \$3,000 per child and greater than \$3,000 per child), the programs that received more UPK funding were significantly more likely to use these funds for equipment, educational materials, hiring new teachers, and hiring assistants than did the programs receiving less funding.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Chi-square tests were used to identify significant differences based on funding level. Significant findings indicate a  $p$  value of  $<.05$ .

*...the programs that received more UPK funding were significantly more likely to use these funds for equipment, educational materials, hiring new teachers, and hiring assistants than did the programs receiving less funding.*

# Impacts & Evaluations of Universal Prekindergarten

The implementation of UPK has brought both new expectations and new opportunities to participating community-based programs. This chapter discusses impacts UPK has had on community based programs in a number of areas, including changes in programming, children served, teachers, curriculum, parent fees, overall revenues, the opening and closing of programs, and other impacts. Future concerns as the program expands and overall satisfaction with UPK are discussed as well.

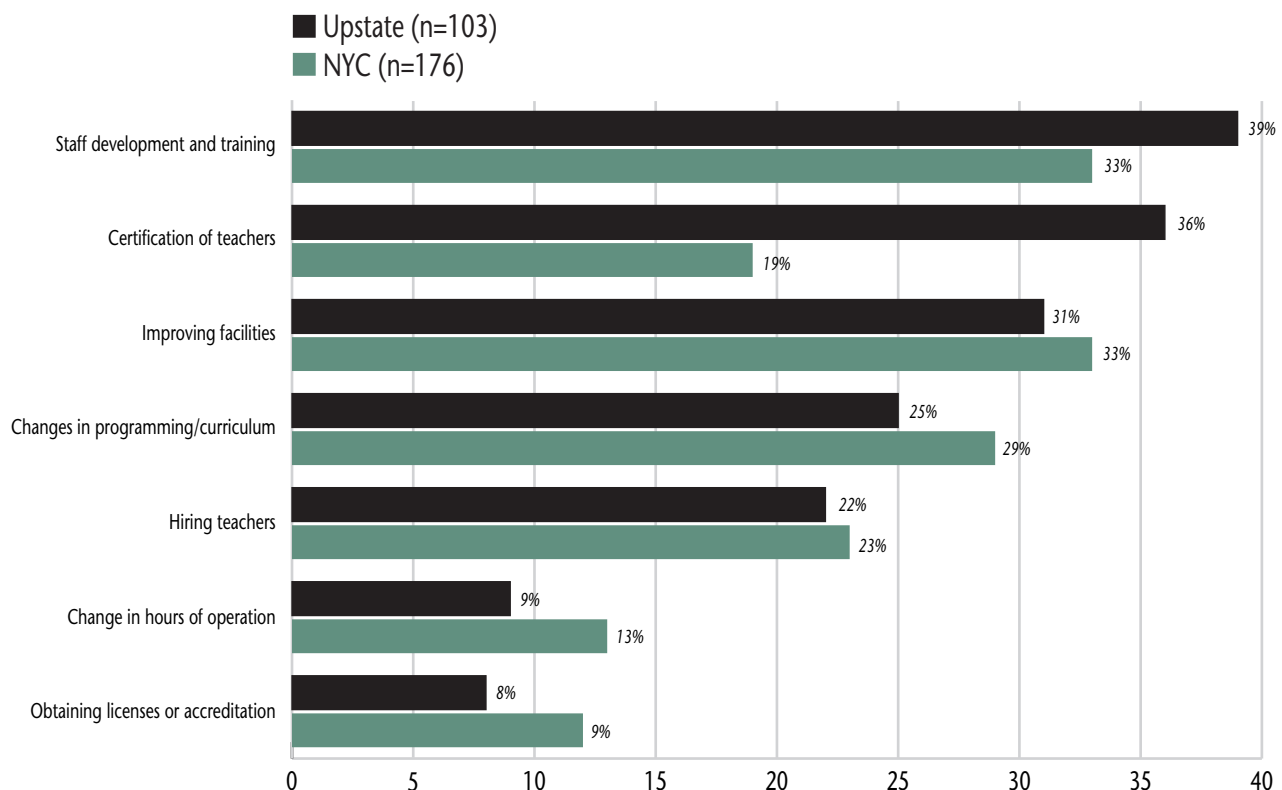
*Approximately half of the programs indicated that they had made one or more changes to enhance their applications to be selected as a UPK site.*

## Program Impacts

### Program improvements

Approximately half of the programs indicated that they had made one or more changes to enhance their applications to be selected as a UPK site. Frequently mentioned by the programs were staff development and training, improving facilities, changes in programming and curriculum, hiring teachers, and in upstate areas, certification of teachers.

**Program Improvements to Enhance Application for UPK**



*...approximately half of the programs in both upstate and New York City regions indicated that the total number of children had increased...*

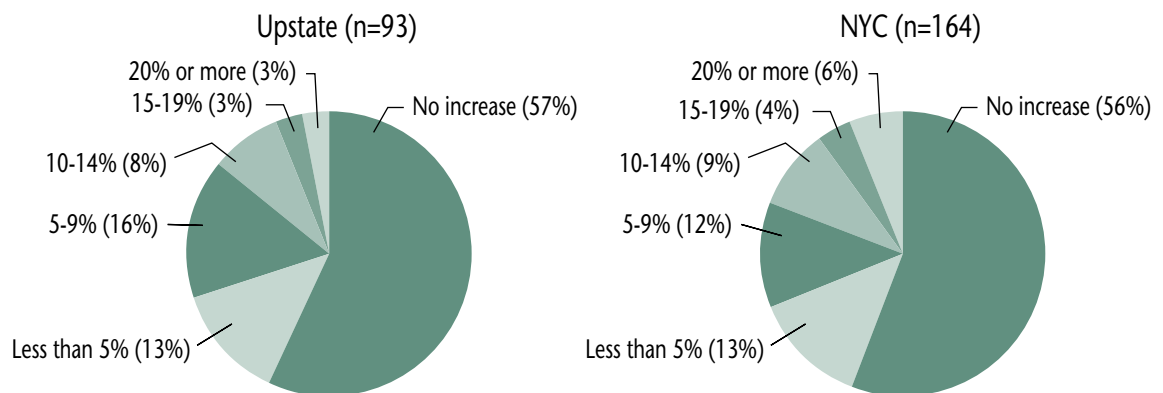
### Changes in children served

Of interest were changes in the number of children served, particularly children with specific background characteristics. For many programs, the number or composition of children did not change since the inception of UPK. However, approximately half of the programs in both upstate and New York City regions indicated that the total number of children had increased, and 30 to 40% reported serving more children from economically disadvantaged families. Between 20 and 30% increased the number of English language learners, and in upstate areas, children with special needs (16% in New York City). The number of infants and toddlers served remained relatively unaffected with only 2 upstate programs and 8 in New York City serving more of these children. However, 3 upstate and 13 New York City programs reported serving fewer infants and toddlers. Only a few programs indicated decreases in services to children from other groups.

### Impacts on teachers

The directors reported that UPK has had impacts on their programs in numerous ways. As discussed in the previous chapters, a substantial number of centers used UPK funds to hire additional teachers and staff such as assistant teachers aides, substitute teachers, parent coordinators, and other support staff. About 40% of upstate and 55% of New York City programs reported they had teachers who had become certified or who are in the process of becoming certified due to UPK. In approximately 40 to 45% of the programs, teacher salaries had increased, with increases generally up to 15%. However, in a few cases, salaries increased 20% or more.

### Increases in Teacher Salaries



### Impacts on curriculum, parent involvement, and the transition to kindergarten

Curriculum, parent involvement, and the transition to kindergarten also were areas in which change was noted. Half (52%) of the programs in both regions reported making curriculum changes as a result of UPK. These changes included the increased use of literacy and math programming, as well as more hands-on activities. About one-quarter reported changes in their parent involvement practices. They typically offered a wider range of opportunities for parents to be involved with their children’s education. Forty percent of upstate and 20% of New York City programs reported changes in transition to kindergarten activities.

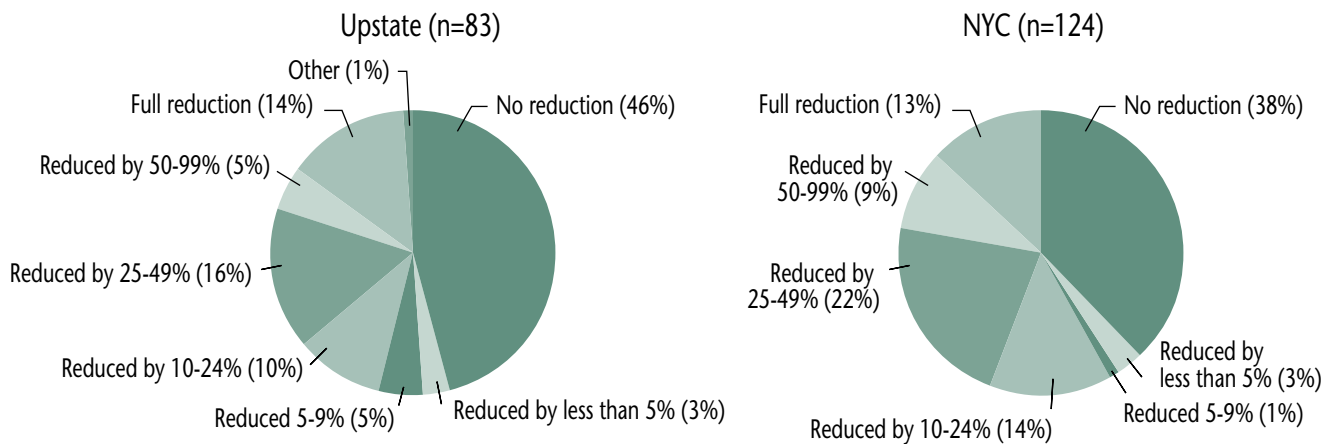
*Of the programs that charge parent fees, 54% of upstate and 62% of New York City programs reduced their fees partially or completely.*

### Impacts on parent fees

Another important area of impact was the reduction of parent fees due to UPK. Of the programs that charge parent fees, 54% of upstate and 62% of New York City programs reduced their fees partially or completely. About one-third of upstate and more than 40% of New York City programs reduced their fees by 25% or more.

#### Reduction in Parent Fees

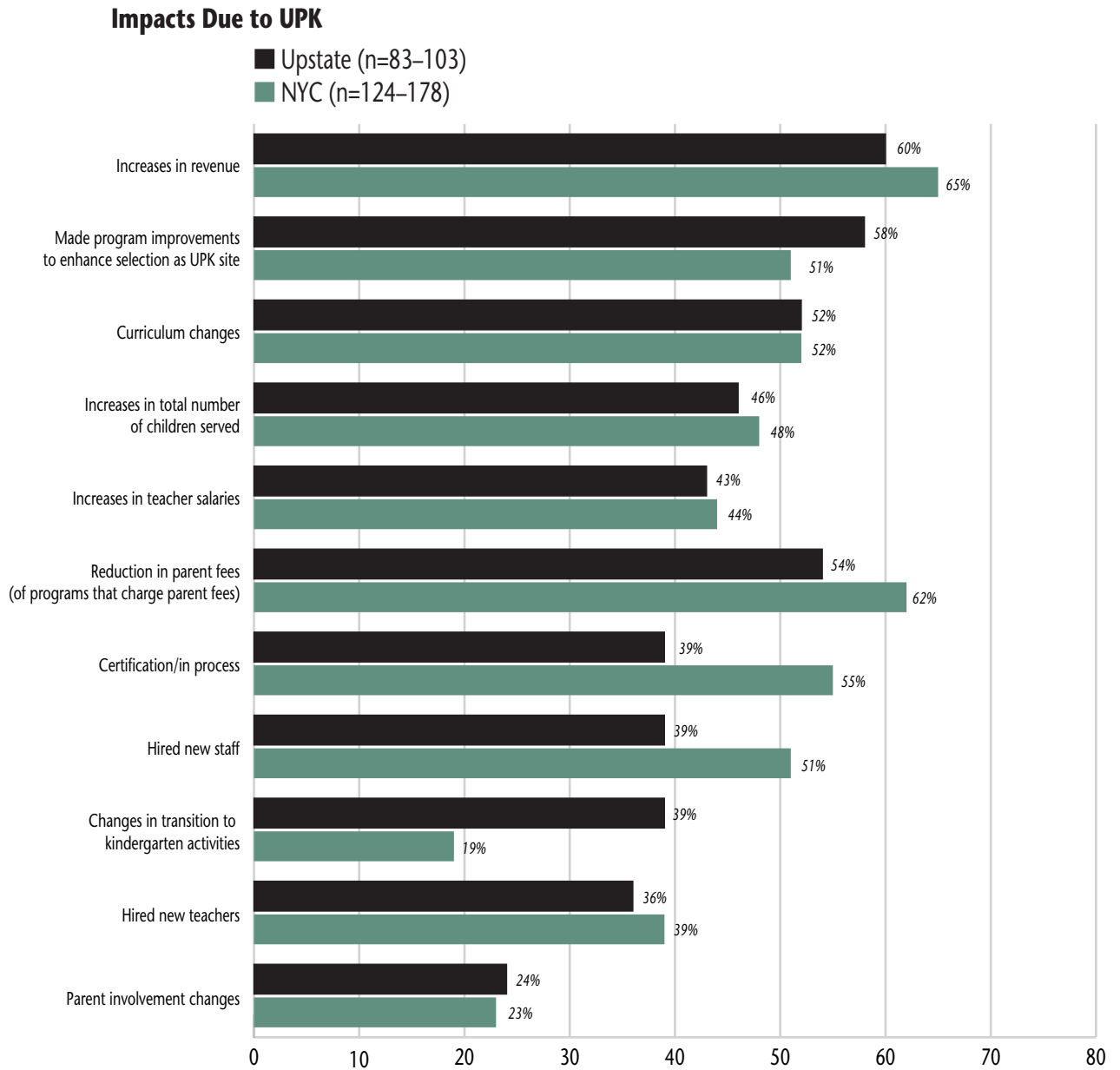
(Percent of Programs that Charge Parent Fees)



### Impacts on revenue

In addition, programs were also asked about the revenue available to them, and whether it was higher as a result of UPK. Sixty percent of upstate programs and 65% of those in New York City indicated that revenues were higher.

The chart below summarizes program impacts due to UPK:





### Opening and closing of programs

The survey asked directors if they were aware of any surrounding community-based programs that had been established or had closed as a result of Universal Prekindergarten. Approximately one-third of upstate and half of New York City directors knew of programs that had opened or were expanded due to UPK. In contrast, only 9% of upstate and 10% of New York City respondents were aware of any programs that had closed as a result of the introduction of UPK into their school districts.

### Additional impacts

The directors were asked to describe the amount of change that had taken place in their programs in a number of additional areas of early childhood education, including interaction with the school district and with other early childhood programs in their communities. The degree of change noted was moderate, with a greater sharing of resources with the school district being the area with the greatest amount of change.

<b>Additional Impacts Due to UPK</b>		
	<b>Upstate</b> n=99–101	<b>NYC</b> n=171–175
Greater sharing of resources with school district	3.22	3.46
Improved assessment measures and techniques	3.00	2.69
Increase in communication	2.96	3.20
Improved access to support services	2.69	2.63
Greater focus on developmentally appropriate practice	2.64	2.73

Scale 1-5; 1=no change; 3=some change; 5=a great deal of change

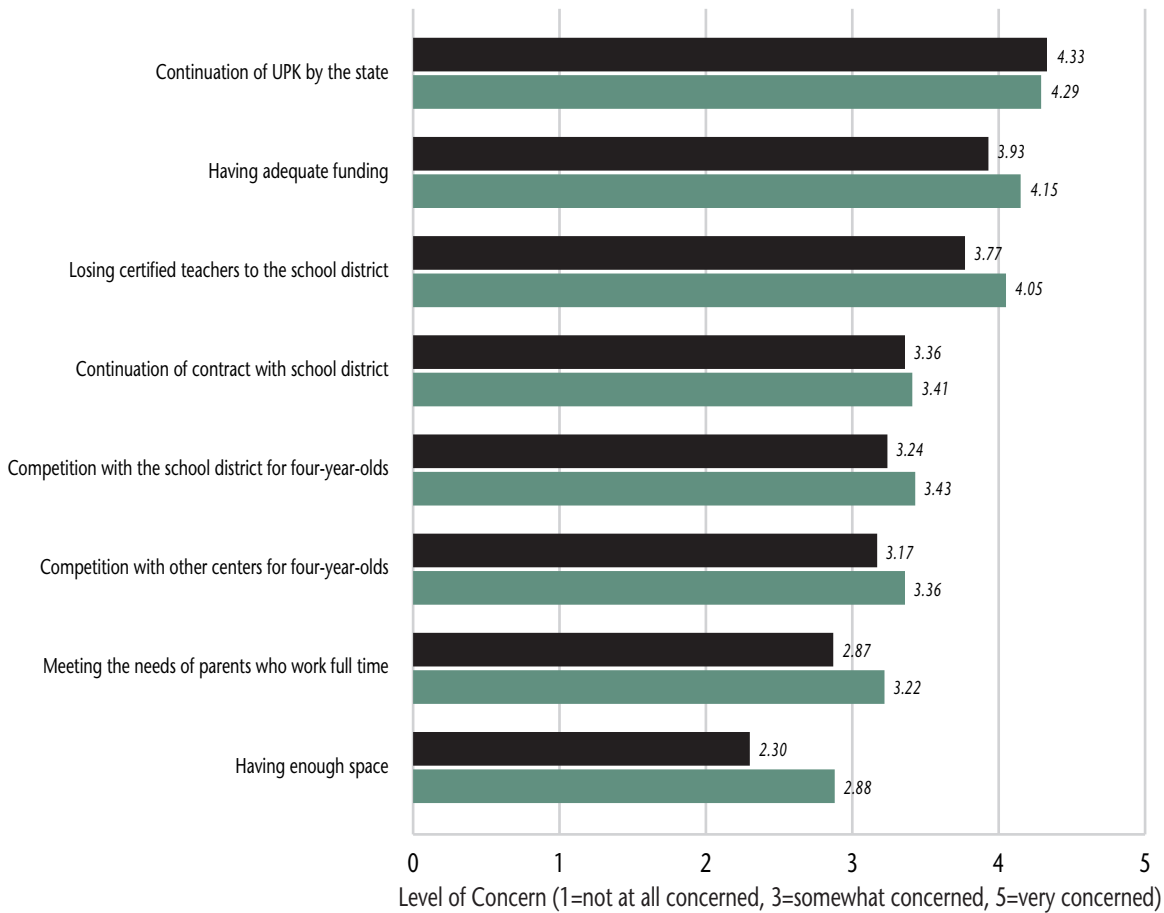
## Future Concerns

CBO directors were asked to express their concerns as UPK continues in the years ahead. Their biggest concerns, both in upstate areas and in New York City, involved program sustainability and funding. They also indicated a great deal of concern over the loss of certified teachers to the school district. Continuation of contracts with the school district, competition for four-year-olds, meeting the needs of parents, and having enough space were areas of moderate concern.

### Future Concerns

■ Upstate (n=97-99)

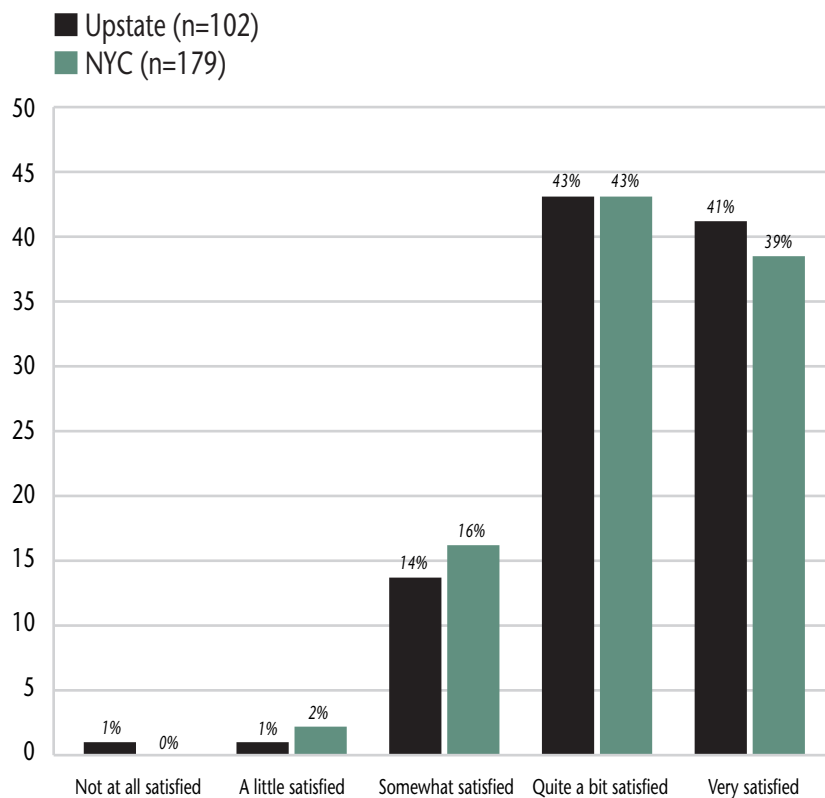
■ NYC (n=162-174)



## Overall Satisfaction with UPK

Finally, program directors were asked to rate their satisfaction with the UPK program as a whole. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1=not at all satisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, and 5=very satisfied, upstate directors' ratings averaged 4.22 and NYC directors' 4.18, indicating a high level of satisfaction. A closer look at scores reveals that almost all directors gave rating of "somewhat satisfied" or higher. Only a few indicated dissatisfaction.

### Overall Satisfaction with UPK



*Their biggest concerns, both in upstate areas and in New York City, involved program sustainability and funding. They also indicated a great deal of concern over the loss of certified teachers to the school district.*

*...almost all directors gave rating of "somewhat satisfied" or higher.*

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## *Discussion & Recommendations*

**T**his study was conducted with the intent of learning about the implementation of Universal Prekindergarten from the perspective of the community-based programs providing UPK services—a voice that needed to be heard for a more complete and comprehensive picture of the UPK experience than has been presented thus far. New York’s model called for a minimum of 10% of district UPK funds to be contracted out to these programs. However, from the beginning, school districts utilized the resources of the many child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start programs, private schools, preschool special education programs, and group family day care centers to a much larger extent, to the point where the majority of children were served in these settings. In some cases, districts contracted out 100% of their UPK classroom funding, retaining only roles of monitoring, oversight, and guidance. The potential for impact on programs—and the entire early childhood system—has been enormous, particularly as we seek new ways to improve the overall quality of care for young children and their families.

Previous research conducted by the Cornell Early Childhood Program, primarily with school district personnel, has suggested that the relationship with CBOs has been a favorable one. This study indicated that this indeed is the case. These programs responded enthusiastically to the opportunities provided by UPK, and they have experienced high levels of satisfaction with the program. They reported good working relationships, positive impacts in a number of key areas such as program improvements, children served, curriculum changes, teacher certification and compensation, and sharing of resources with the school district. The financial resources contributed to increased revenues, as well as expenditures in educational programming and equipment, teachers and staff, professional development, transportation, physical classroom space, and numerous other improvements. Of particular interest is the reduction in parent fees by a sizeable proportion of the programs, thereby making high quality care more affordable for families.

The programs also shed light on some difficulties—finding and retaining qualified teachers, having adequate funding, and the continuation of UPK by the State. These concerns have also been expressed in earlier inquiries. At the time of this study, UPK was in its fourth year and had experienced considerable expansion. However, since that time budget and political constraints have prevented the full implementation that was originally intended. Resumed expansion, particularly if on a broad scale, will necessitate additional examination into the impacts upon and concerns of community-based programs.

One of the key principles that guided our UPK research efforts has been that district UPK programs be designed in ways that strengthen and expand existing early care and education networks and programs. This report focused on a number of key areas of UPK implementation—collaboration with school districts, teachers, curriculum and programming, financing, and impacts and evaluations of UPK. As reported earlier, respondents cited two primary motivations when asked why their community-based programs decided to participate in the UPK program: access to an additional source of revenue and the opportunity to improve program quality. This chapter is organized around those themes, along with the issue of which children have access to UPK services.

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## Additional Revenues

Revenue issues of interest included the significance of UPK as a funding source, regional and district-level variations in the amount of funding CBOs received, satisfaction with those funding levels, and the relationship between UPK funding and the fees charged by programs to participating families.

### UPK as a significant funding source

When examined alongside the many other funding sources used by these community-based programs, the UPK portion of total revenue emerged as a key source, contributing more than any other single source of funding in New York City and exceeded only by parent fees in the upstate programs. Analysis of the extent to which this added revenue was offset by reductions in parent fees revealed that these reductions, while important, were relatively modest (typically 25-49%), resulting in a substantial net gain in revenue for participating programs. The findings reported in Chapter Six document how those additional funds were being used: to strengthen the curriculum (educational materials, equipment, field trips) and the teacher corps (hiring lead, assistant, and substitute teachers and increasing salaries). The clear picture that emerges from this study is that UPK funding is having a significant, positive impact on aspects of educational programming that have been shown in large-scale national studies to predict improvements in cognitive development and school readiness.<sup>25</sup>

### Variations in level of UPK funding

UPK funding flows from the New York State Education Department to the school district, which has discretion regarding how much money is retained at the district level and how much is passed along to community-based sites. The per-child amount of funding passed along by the school districts to the responding community-based programs in this study varied substantially, from a low of less than \$2,000 per child to a high of \$3,500 or more. These differences are partly explained by locale (NYC/ upstate). Early in the life of New York UPK, advocates in New York City negotiated a higher per child allocation for New York City school districts than had originally been projected state-wide. Upstate cities serving high proportions of children from low-income families also received higher allocations per child than other upstate school districts.<sup>26</sup> However, those allocations are to the school districts; they do not necessarily reflect the levels of funding passed along to community-based UPK programs by those districts. Our findings indicate, for instance, that while about two-thirds of the 181 New York City programs responding to our survey were receiving between \$3,000-\$3499 per child annually, about 30% were receiving less than \$3,000 and for about half of those, the amount

<sup>25</sup> J. Arnett (1989), Caregivers in Day-Care Centers: Does Training Matter? *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 10, 541-552; D.I. Cassidy, S. Pugh-Hoese, M.I. Buell, and S. Russell (1995), The effect of education on childcare teachers' beliefs and classroom quality: Year one evaluation of the T.E.A.C.H. early childhood associate degree scholarship program. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 10, 171-183; Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team (1995), *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Center*, Public Report, second edition. Denver: Economics Department, University of Colorado at Denver; C. Howes (1997), Children's Experiences in Center-Based Child Care as a Function of Teacher Background and Adult-Child Ratio. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 43(3), 404-425; S. Kagan and N. Cohen (1997), *Not By Chance: Creating an Early Care and Education System for America's Children*. New Haven, CT: Yale University; M. Whitebook, C. Howes, and D. Phillips (1989), *Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America*. Final report: National Child Care Staffing Study. Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.

<sup>26</sup> Cochran, 2004; Watamura, 2004.

was less than \$2,500. These discrepancies, when multiplied by the number of children served in those programs, add up to a significant amount of lost revenue.

### **Satisfaction with funding level**

About three quarters of responding directors described the amount of funding they received from UPK as adequate or better. The considerable range in the amount of funds received by programs, discussed above, may have led to the dissatisfaction that was expressed. A question deserving further consideration involves whether variation in funding levels is linked with differences in the services and the quality of service provided to children and their families. Additional analyses will provide more insight into this possibility. Because our survey was not designed specifically to test this question, our data are not ideally suited to address the possible link between funding level and quality indicators. In our judgment, a study aimed explicitly to address this issue is needed. If quality is compromised by per-child allocations below an identifiable threshold, then the State Education Department should consider the possibility of specifying a minimum per-child allotment to community-based UPK programs.

### **Reducing parent fees**

As noted earlier, of the programs whose directors reported that they charged fees to parents, over half indicated that these fees had been reduced as a result of UPK funding, with typical reduction in the range of 25-49%. This reduction in parent fees by a significant portion of UPK programs demonstrates UPK's role in making prekindergarten services more affordable and accessible, especially for lower-income families. At the same time, our data reflect an apparent lack of consistency in this locally determined practice. Findings generated through an in-depth case study conducted earlier by the Cornell Early Childhood Program clarified the reasons why community-based UPK programs that also provide child care on a fee-paying basis cannot reduce parent fees by the full amount of UPK funding received from the district.<sup>27</sup> The UPK legislation requires, for instance, that head teachers be state-certified, which in New York entails a masters degree. In order to attract teachers with this level of qualification community-based programs will have to pay higher salaries, especially if competing against the higher-paid UPK teaching positions in school-based UPK classrooms. Programs must also pay the cost of teacher substitutes in order to release UPK classroom teachers for professional development activities provided by the school district. Thus, a good case can be made for considering a portion of the UPK allocation to be funding *in addition to* rather than *in place of* parent fees. The extent of variation in this practice identified by this study was dramatic, however. Forty to 50% of the respondents whose programs charged parent fees reported no reduction at all. Of those who did provide reductions, over 60% reduced them by less than half. It is reasonable to assume that there will be considerable variation from program to program in overall financial need, and in the capacity of participating families to underwrite the prekindergarten service. A better understanding is needed of just how these and other factors enter into program-level policy decisions regarding whether and how much to use UPK funding to reduce the overall cost to families of child care. This issue deserves further study, and the variation in practices among community-based UPK programs in New York provides fertile ground for such research.

<sup>27</sup> Cochran, 2004.

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## Program Quality

Quality indicators used in this study included teacher certification and salaries, teacher professional development activities, educational investments made with UPK funds, and other positive UPK-related changes reported by directors.

### Challenges with Teacher Recruitment and Retention

One major challenge reported by these community-based UPK programs involved teacher recruitment and retention. This is partly because salaries paid by school-based UPK programs are substantially higher than those able to be paid in these community-based facilities. For instance, 59% of the upstate CBO directors reported their UPK teachers earned less than \$25,000 a year, whereas an earlier survey of school district UPK program coordinators upstate found that 85% of districts paid their school-based UPK teachers \$30,000 a year or more.<sup>28</sup> The difficulty in competing for certified teachers affects both initial recruitment and the willingness of teachers, once hired, to remain in the position. Given the competitive salaries paid to school-based teachers by the school districts, it was not surprising to find that about two-thirds of the community-based programs reported their lead teachers had been there for four years or less. Respondents also reported a shortage of Birth–Grade 2/N-6 certified teachers in their communities, with this shortfall appearing to be especially acute in New York City.

<sup>28</sup> Lekies and Cochran, 2001.

It is worth noting that UPK teachers in these community settings were earning more than their counterparts in the same settings who were not teaching in UPK classrooms. For example, almost half of the upstate center directors reported their lead teachers (UPK and non-UPK) earned less than \$20,000 per year, whereas only about one quarter reported this was the case for just their UPK teachers. In New York City, all preschool teachers are required by the City to have state teaching certificates, unless granted a special exemption. One effect of this within-center differential is to create an additional step on the career ladder for lead teachers in community-based programs receiving UPK funding. UPK lead teachers in New York are required to have State Education Department certification, whereas this is not the case for lead teachers in upstate licensed non-UPK child care settings. Therefore advancing into the UPK lead teacher position from a regular child care teacher position may require the acquisition of additional credentials.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See Cochran, 2004 and K. S. Lekies and M. Cochran (2002), *Early Care and Education Workforce Recruitment and Preparation in New York*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program, for more information on credentials and requirements.

Teachers in New York City are paid substantially more than those upstate regardless of educational background. About three-quarters of directors in reporting upstate school districts reported their teachers were earning less than \$25,000, whereas this proportion was less than a quarter in New York City. These data replicate similar findings reported in an earlier study of the school district UPK coordinators. The New York City salaries reflect the higher cost of living in that region of the state, which is taken into account by the higher per child UPK allocations awarded to school districts there.

### Teacher Certification

The community-based programs in this sample reported that over half of all of their lead teachers of four-year-olds were state certified, either permanently or provisionally. This includes teachers of UPK children as well as non-UPK children. Some directors indicated that their center's participation in UPK provided impetus for completing certification requirements and reported they had teachers engaged in the certification process. Statewide



<sup>30</sup> Lekies and Cochran, 2001.

data indicate that about 90% of upstate UPK teachers and 75% of those in New York City have state certification.<sup>30</sup> It is essential that supports be provided to non-certified teachers to obtain the necessary credentials, so that a pool of qualified teachers is available in all centers should existing UPK teachers leave for school district or other positions, or in the event that UPK expands and more classrooms can be added.

### **Professional Development**

The directors of community-based UPK programs reported that the teachers in those programs participated in a wide range of professional development activities offered by the school district. Two-thirds or more of respondents both upstate and in New York City listed workshops and conferences, meetings, and district-initiated visits to their classrooms as the most prevalent types of teacher development activities engaged in by their UPK teachers. There was also indication in a number of instances that involvement in training opportunities spilled over to the directors themselves and to assistant teachers and classroom aides. The major reported barrier to participation in these professional development activities was the unavailability of substitute teachers to provide classroom coverage during the time that teachers would be attending the training opportunities. The financing data gathered through this study suggest that the capacity to hire substitute teachers depends on the amount of funding per child received from the school district. One possible consequence of lower per-child subsidies to CBO programs could be less participation in school district sponsored professional development opportunities due to greater difficulty covering the cost of substitute teachers.

One popular professional development strategy is the provision of on-site consultation and mentoring in the classroom by experienced teacher trainers. In an earlier study, teachers reported finding this support especially helpful because it is individualized to their particular circumstances and provides continuity over time.<sup>31</sup> This strategy also has the advantage of not requiring the expense of teacher substitutes referenced earlier.

<sup>31</sup> Cochran, 2004.

### **Quality Improvements through Participation in UPK**

When asked how they invested the UPK funds received from the school district, CBO program directors were most likely to list curriculum-related resources: educational materials, equipment, and field trips. Next came investments related to strengthening the teacher corps: hiring lead, assistant, and substitute teachers and increasing salaries. The third major area of investment involved reducing parent fees. As mentioned earlier, the underlying logic reflected in these priorities—that resources be used to improve the quality of the educational experience and for the teachers providing it—is sound, and in accord with what is known from previous studies about early care and education.

We also asked what changes had occurred in the responding programs as a result of participation in UPK. Quality-related areas in which many directors reported some progress included improved assessment measures and techniques, improved access to support services, and greater focus on developmentally appropriate practices. When asked whether parent involvement in their programs had changed as a result of UPK, about a quarter of responding directors indicated that there had been alterations. Changes cited included a wider range of opportunities for family involvement and an increased parent voice. Although only about 25% of respondents reported



these changes, the shifts that were mentioned mirrored those identified in an earlier case study.<sup>32</sup> A number of teachers in community-based organizations interviewed for the earlier study indicated that the UPK emphasis on involving parents legitimized that aspect of comprehensive preschool programming, allowing them to engage parents in ways that would not have been supported by their sponsoring organization prior to the introduction of universal prekindergarten.

<sup>32</sup> Cochran, 2004.

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## Access to UPK Services

In our eagerness to probe the intricacies and uncover the nuances of community-based UPK programs, it is easy to lose sight of the larger picture. The majority of New York's parents with four-year-olds need full-day child care while they work or study outside the home. The public schools have neither the space nor the inclination to provide these child care services. Therefore, by delivering universal prekindergarten within full-day child care programs, the school district is fitting that educational opportunity to the needs of many families in the school district; that is, making UPK accessible to children who would not be able to participate otherwise. In those cases where child care fees are reduced as a result of the infusion of UPK funds, this is an additional benefit for parents. The school district also profits from the fact that the participating CBOs provide space for UPK classrooms that in most cases simply isn't available within the walls of school buildings. Thus, the subcontracting of UPK services to community-based child care programs has pay-offs for both parents and the school districts, *if those services can be delivered in a manner that has clear positive results for participating children*. The findings from this study indicate that the UPK resources are indeed being invested in ways that are likely to enhance children's development and learning.

If the opportunity to collaborate with community-based programs in the delivery of UPK services was removed from school districts through a change in UPK regulations, then parents would typically be forced to choose between a part-day school-based UPK program or full-day child care. Under that condition many parents working full-time would choose the latter, both to avoid the problem of transporting the child between the two programs and to prevent the disruption to the child of having to move from one setting to another each day. This tension between the full-day child care needs of families and the half-day schedule of universal prekindergarten is currently seen most visibly in the case of families using family child care, a setting not included in most district UPK programs but chosen by substantial numbers of parents with full-time jobs. Our previous research indicates that most of the four-year-olds in family child care do not have access to universal prekindergarten because neither their parents nor the family child care provider is able to transport them to and from that part-day school-based program.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cochran, 2004.

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## Conclusions

The directors of CBO programs involved with UPK that responded to this survey expressed a high level of satisfaction with the relationship with their school district. Most felt that the level of monitoring by the districts was appropriate, that constraints imposed by the district were reasonable, and that supports were considerable. Overall feelings of satisfaction were very positive statewide. The substantive findings from this survey underscore

the reasons for this satisfaction: UPK funding and participation has resulted in enriched classroom pedagogy and curricula, improved teacher salaries and strengthened professional development, more attention to parent and family involvement, and in many cases an overall reduction in parent fees. A primary area of concern identified by respondents is recruitment and retention of qualified lead teachers, especially those with state certification. A number of issues deserving future study were identified, including the substantial variation in per-child funding amounts passed along to CBOs by school districts, and the variation in parent fee reductions made by those local programs that charge parent fees.

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## Recommendations

- ★ *Recommendation 1:* Increase the required minimum UPK investment by school districts in community-based programming from the current 10% to 25%.

A primary reason for requiring that school districts invest a portion of their UPK funds in community-based programs is to improve the fit between family needs and educational opportunity. Most school districts are not prepared to provide full-day (8+ hours) early childhood education programs within the public schools. Yet more than half of the four-year-olds in New York live in families where the sole parent or both parents work full-time. Thus in order to ensure these children access to UPK it is essential that some of those services be provided in full-day settings, *as long as this can be done at a level of quality equivalent to that provided in the public schools*. The findings from this study, and those generated by earlier studies of UPK implementation conducted by the Cornell Early Childhood Program, indicate that quality at this level can be provided in community-based settings. Therefore, given that the majority of families with four-year-olds require full-day arrangements, we recommend this increase in the minimum community investment from 10% to 25%. In fact, the vast majority of participating school districts are already investing 25% of their funds or more, so the change would affect only a small number of districts. In those school districts where this requirement could be demonstrated to pose a severe hardship on the UPK program, a waiver should be provided.

- ★ *Recommendation 2:* If evidence indicates that program quality is reduced when school districts provide less than a specified amount of funding per-child to community-based organizations, the State Department of Education should establish a minimum amount per child that all participating districts must provide in contracts with community-based organizations.

Several findings from this study suggest that there may be a relationship between the amount of money per child passed on to community-based organizations by the school district and the quality of UPK programming provided by those organizations. Significant variation in these allocations has been documented, even within region. These findings also show that CBO directors are most likely to allocate UPK funds to curriculum-related resources and the strengthening of the teacher corps—areas directly linked to program quality. It is reasonable to predict, therefore, that a revenue difference (for instance, between \$3,000 and \$2,000 a year per child) would be manifested in a less rich educational environment and less talented teachers in the CBOs receiving the lower amount. A study designed explic-

itly to address this possibility needs to be conducted. An effort should be made in this study to identify a financial “floor” below which a significant deterioration in quality is found. If this relationship between funding level and quality is demonstrated, then the State Education Department should protect program quality at the school district level by requiring districts to fund community-based UPK classrooms at a level above the identified “floor” for quality.<sup>34</sup>

- ★ *Recommendation 3:* The State Education Department should require school districts to include CBO teachers and other staff in all the UPK-related staff development activities provided by the district.

School districts vary in the extent to which they extend their UPK-related staff development efforts beyond teachers and other staff hired by the district, to those working in community-based settings. Furthermore, even when CBO staff are welcomed into district-sponsored off-site staff development activities, their opportunities to participate are governed by the capacity of the CBO to hire teacher substitutes while they are in attendance off-site. The hiring of teacher substitutes is in turn a function of funding available to cover those additional costs (see Recommendation #2). Because staff development training is a primary strategy used by school districts to improve the quality of UPK services and to ensure a consistent level of quality across classrooms, it is essential that teachers and other staff in community-based sites have access to those resources. This can best be accomplished through the monitoring of the State Education Department, which should require assurances from each participating school district that the costs incurred by CBOs in order to access those resources are covered in CBO contracts with their local districts.

- ★ *Recommendation 4:* A resource guide to effective in-classroom mentoring of and consultation to UPK teachers and teacher aides should be developed and made available to participating UPK school districts, based on “best practices” currently in use in some New York district UPK programs.

On-site, in-classroom staff development strategies like teacher mentoring and coaching have been very well received by teachers and are reported to be effective at improving teacher performance.<sup>35</sup> This approach to professional development and quality improvement has several added advantages. It doesn’t require substitutes while regular teachers are participating, and it allows a support-focused ongoing monitoring of practices in CBO classrooms. Because this approach to teacher support is already used within UPK in New York, it is feasible to identify a number of examples of successful practice, derive a set of guidelines from these examples, and produce a resource guide that can be used by districts interested in introducing the approach or improving existing practice. Broad distribution of such a resource guide would encourage school districts to take maximum advantage of a highly regarded approach to professional development and support. It would also provide state-level endorsement for provision of district-level professional development to teachers working in community-based settings.

- ★ *Recommendation 5:* A study of the demand for and supply of teachers certified to lead UPK classrooms should be carried out in order to

<sup>34</sup> Further analysis of available data is needed to determine precisely what proportion of state UPK allocations to relevant school districts was subcontracted to participating community-based programs. In addition, the analyses in this report do not take into account any additional resources or services that the school district may be providing at the CBO site.

<sup>35</sup> Previous UPK implementation studies conducted by the Cornell Early Childhood Program have documented that a number of New York school districts are using this kind of direct, in-classroom, one-to-one support for teachers (Lekies and Cochran, 2001), and that both CBO teachers and UPK administrators give this professional development strategy high marks (Cochran, 2002).

determine whether community-based programs eligible to provide UPK services will be able to attract and retain the necessary teaching staff.

The current study has supported the previously documented challenge faced by CBO directors of attracting and retaining qualified, experienced UPK teachers, and the salary disparity between those teachers and their counterparts in public school-based UPK classrooms within the same school district. The finding that about half of all lead teachers in the programs participating in this study have certification, and many of these held only provisional certification, suggests that finding, hiring, and retaining qualified teachers will be an ongoing challenge for community based organizations. Virtually nothing is known about the current supply of UPK-qualified teachers in New York, or the capacity of the higher education system in New York to produce teachers with appropriate credentials. A study of the institutions of higher education in New York that offer preschool teacher certification programs should be undertaken to answer these questions of teacher supply, taking into consideration the actual choice of career following completion of certification. The findings from this study should be used to guide future planning in teacher preparation at both the state level and within individual institutions of higher learning.

★ *Recommendation 6:* A study should be undertaken to better understand the relationship between receipt of UPK funds by community-based organizations and their use of parent fees in order to meet the costs of good quality program provision. The findings from that study should be used to develop a policy regarding the extent to which UPK funding is expected to offset the fees paid by parents.

This study is the first to document the extent to which state UPK funding is reducing the cost of full-day child care for parents with children enrolled in full-day child care programs that contract to provide UPK services. Our findings indicate that only about half of the programs that charge parent fees had lowered them at all as a result of access to UPK funds, and that there was great variation in the percentages of reduction made by those who did lower fees.

We understand why UPK funding cannot offset parent fees on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Program costs go up when a CBO decides to provide UPK services. The requirement for a certified teacher has usually not been met previously by the community-based program, and so meeting this stipulation will often require payment of higher teacher salaries. There are costs involved in participating in some of the staff development opportunities offered by the school district. More educational materials and other resources are needed to meet the quality expectations of the school districts. We also recognize that the financing of each community-based early childhood program is a unique blend of funding streams determined by the characteristics of families served, the types of other services offered by the CBO, and the nature of affiliations with other sponsoring organizations and groups. Our findings showing a wide range of responses to the possibility of lowering parent fees provided by UPK funding undoubtedly reflect this complexity. However, more information is needed to understand why some programs have decided that acceptance of UPK funds will provide no fee relief at all for the families they serve. The findings from this research should be used to determine whether to institute policies or regulations that guarantee parents some child care fee relief when their children participate in a UPK classroom within the full-day, full-year child care program in which their children are enrolled.

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## Cornell Early Childhood Program Reports

**Hicks, S., Lekies, K. S., & Cochran, M. (1999).** *Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.

This report presents findings from an analysis of school district plans for UPK programming submitted to the State Education Department for Year One of UPK. Information on how districts have structured their programming, services offered, use of developmentally appropriate practices, and collaboration are topics covered. Exemplary practices are highlighted.

**Lekies, K. S., & Heitzman, E. H. (2001).** *Early Care for Infants and Toddlers: Examining the Broader Impacts of Universal Prekindergarten*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.

Findings are presented from a statewide study of child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies on the impacts of Universal Prekindergarten. Topics covered include CCR&R involvement in UPK implementation, perceived impacts on services to infants and toddlers, competition for four-year-olds, community concerns, and positive impacts of UPK.

**Lekies, K. S., & Cochran, M. (2001).** *Collaborating for Kids: New York State Universal Prekindergarten 1999-2000*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.

This report summarizes survey and final report data from over 90 "Wave One" school districts that continued their participation in Universal Prekindergarten during the second year of program implementation. Universal access and diversity, school-community collaboration, parent involvement, developmentally appropriate practice, teacher



preparation, financing, and program successes and challenges are the primary topics covered in this report.

**Lekies, K. S., and Cochran, M. (2002). *Early Childhood Workforce Preparation in New York State: A Pilot Study*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.**

Covered in this report are a number of issues central to early childhood teacher preparation in New York State. Included are a discussion of career trajectories in public school prekindergarten, child care and Head Start, with particular reference to the educational requirements attached to the various pathways; the current capacity of higher education system to grant degrees at various levels; lessons learned from an articulation case study involving a four-year college and two community colleges; and resources and incentives available to assist those interested in obtaining higher education or credentials.

**Lekies, K.S. & Cochran, M. (2004). *Continuing the Collaboration: Universal Prekindergarten Expansion in New York State*.**

This report presents findings from a follow-up study of *Collaborating for Kids* in which district UPK coordinators were asked about their experiences with UPK. Key questions focus on issues of program expansion, such as universal access, collaboration with community-based programs, programming and monitoring trends, teacher certification, financing, and district concerns.

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## Case Study Series

**Implementing a Statewide Universal Prekindergarten Program: Case Study Series (2004)**

**Cochran, M. (2004). *Implementing a Statewide Universal Prekindergarten Program: An Urban Case Study*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.**

**Schwartz, F. (2004). *Implementing a Statewide Universal Prekindergarten Program: A New York City Case Study*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.**

**Watamura, S. (2004). *Implementing a Statewide Universal Prekindergarten Program: A Rural Case Study*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.**

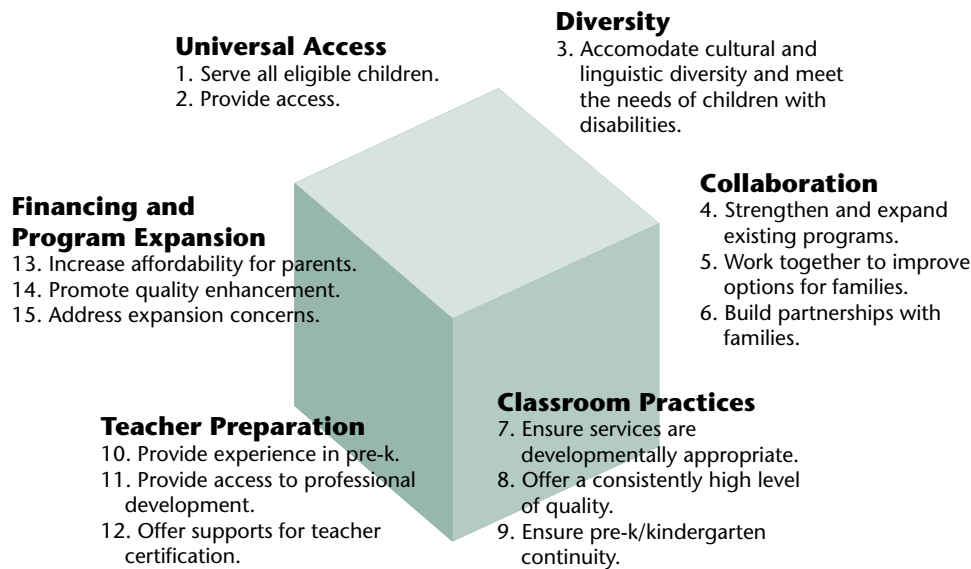
**Watamura, S. (2004). *Implementing a Statewide Universal Prekindergarten Program: A Small City Case Study*. Ithaca, NY: The Cornell Early Childhood Program.**

These reports provide findings from in-depth case studies of UPK implementation in four New York State school districts—one urban, one rural, one small city, and one in New York City. Planning processes, leadership, collaboration with community-based organizations, developmentally appropriate practices, teacher certification, child recruitment, program successes, and ongoing challenges are topics addressed.

# Guiding Principles

Fifteen basic principles guided the development of the survey and presentation of its findings. These principles were derived from the program requirements specified in the Section 3602-e of Education Law establishing Universal Prekindergarten (UPK), the regulations developed to implement the law<sup>36</sup>, and current knowledge of the care and education of young children. The principles have been organized under six major dimensions: Universal Access, Diversity, Collaboration, Classroom Practices, Teacher Preparation, and Financing and Program Expansion. These headings provide the structure for the presentation of findings that follow.

<sup>36</sup> Sub-part 151-1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education



## Universal Access

**1.** District UPK programs serve all eligible children in the district rather than target children with particular developmental characteristics or family backgrounds.

The clear intent of the state law authorizing this program is that it be available to all children whose families wish their children to attend, rather than target children from low-income families or children deemed at risk for other reasons.<sup>37</sup> The UPK statewide program is funded with state and local tax revenues provided by all the taxpayers in the state and school district. District programs are made available to the broadest possible spectrum of district families.

<sup>37</sup> An amendment to the UPK statute required districts to give preference to children who are economically disadvantaged in the 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 school years.

**2.** Districts make substantial efforts to provide access to all children eligible for UPK.

UPK programs are not only available, they are accessible for the eligible children. Districts offer a range of programming that meets the needs of families by offering half-, full-, and extended day options. Transportation assistance and neighborhood-based programs also help reach children so that distance from home to the school or child care center is not problematic. In addition, UPK is combined with the services offered by family child care providers so that the children in these arrangements also benefit from what UPK has to offer.

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## Diversity

**3.** The UPK programs developed by districts accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families within their districts; meet the needs of children with disabilities; and help children learn about, respect, and appreciate the differences among them.

The universal prekindergarten regulations emphasize the importance of designing programs that meet the needs of children from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as those children with disabilities or other special needs. Teachers can design classroom environments and activities in ways that help children learn to understand, respect, and appreciate the differences that exist among them.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> L. Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force, *Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989).

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## Collaboration

**4.** District UPK programs strengthen and expand existing early care and education networks and programs.

A key component of the legislation is the requirement that districts contract out at least 10% of their UPK funds with organizations outside public school settings for the purpose of providing direct educational services to children. To help facilitate such collaboration, regulations required districts to establish an advisory board to assess the need for a UPK program and to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding the program design prior to implementation. Appointed by the Superintendent, the committee needed to include Board of Education members, teachers, parents of children who attend district schools, community leaders, and early care and education providers. In addition to these requirements, New York City committees needed to include members of the community school board and the community school district superintendent or superintendent's designee.

Through this set-aside requirement, stronger linkages can be formed between local schools and the providers of early care and education, early childhood programs, Head Start, and other community agencies. Opportunities exist for active participation in the UPK planning process, as well as through the provision of direct services to children and their families.

**5.** School- and community-based programs appreciate each other's unique strengths, and they work together to improve and expand options for families.



While school-based programs often have greater access to a well-established administrative structure, financial resources, and staff development opportunities than do those in the community, community-based programs have traditionally experienced greater levels of parent involvement due to their accessibility and often exclusive service to the preschool-age population. Each type of service provider in a school district learns from and appreciates the strengths each has to offer to the children, families, and UPK program as a whole. Programs capitalize on each other's strengths and work together to raise the overall level of quality for all programs. They expand choices and options for families.

**6.** Districts make substantial efforts to build partnerships between families and local universal prekindergarten programs.

The new law specifies that programs shall provide for strong parental partnerships and involvement in UPK. A substantial amount of research now documents the long-term benefits for children accruing from active family involvement with their early care and education. A strong family involvement tradition has been established through the existing Experimental Prekindergarten Program. The UPK regulations specify that family involvement should be fostered in the language that families understand best.

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## Classroom Practices

**7.** The educational services provided by UPK programs are developmentally appropriate for the children served by those programs.

Developmentally appropriate practice with young children involves a clear understanding of the interests, strengths, and needs of the children being served.<sup>39</sup> Through careful room arrangement and curriculum planning, teachers are able to capitalize on the interests of young children and build these into learning experiences across a wide range of skills and activities. Thus the role of the teacher is to organize the environment to stimulate and support children's play-based learning, to interact with the children in meaningful ways, and to help children plan, carry out, and reflect on their learning experience.<sup>40</sup>

**8.** All UPK sites in a district offer a consistently high level of quality early care and education services.

In any given community, programs will vary in their physical space, number of children served, activities, scheduling, teachers, funding sources, administrative support, and geographical location. However, it is essential that all UPK sites offer high quality services to the children and families they serve.

**9.** UPK staff work with teachers in the early primary grades to ensure that the developmentally appropriate experiences children have in prekindergarten are carried forward into kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

The new law specifies that universal prekindergarten programs ensure "continuity...with instruction in the early primary grades." Efforts through curriculum planning, child and family activities, assessment, and communication among UPK, kindergarten, and elementary teachers can assist children in making a successful transition to kindergarten and the early grades. A successful transition would include involving and preparing parents and children for the upcoming change.

<sup>39</sup> See S. Bredecamp and C. Copple, Eds., *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Revised Edition* (Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997), for a thorough overview.

<sup>40</sup> *Preschool Planning Guide: Building a Foundation for Development of Language and Literacy in the Early Years* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, State Education Department, 1998), p. 5.

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## Teacher Preparation

**10.** The teachers working with children in UPK programs understand how preschool children develop and learn, and they have experience working in preschool settings.

This principle reflects the understanding that preschool children learn differently from older children. Until recently, a teacher could be certified to work with prekindergarten children but have taught only at the elementary school level. Effective February 2004, any new teachers must be certified for Birth-Grade 2 in order to be employed in a UPK classroom. If school districts assign teachers without education and experience in working with preschool children, it is essential that those teachers be prepared for such assignments through further training and apprenticeship experiences.

**11.** All UPK teachers, whether in school- or community-based sites, have access to professional development opportunities.

Professional development is important to all teachers and teaching staff, particularly for those who have limited knowledge about and experience with preschool children. New strategies, new information, team-building opportunities, and collaboration with teachers across sites or between Pre-K and kindergarten are also beneficial. Districts offer professional development opportunities to staff in all UPK sites, whether in school- or community-based sites, and these opportunities are readily accessible to all who wish to attend.

**12.** Teachers who are not currently state-certified have access to a range of supports to assist them in obtaining this certification.

Districts offer a range of supports to their uncertified UPK teachers, such as financial assistance, release time, and help with test preparation, as well as encouragement and psychological support. They also work with community-based programs who may be interested in UPK but do not have certified teachers by providing information and referrals to universities offering certification, along with any state programs that may provide financial assistance.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> The New York Educational Incentive Program provides financial assistance for coursework to directors, teachers, and other child care providers working in licensed or registered child care programs.

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## Financing and Program Expansion

**13.** Universal Prekindergarten funds are combined with other sources of revenue to make early care and education services more affordable to families by reducing the amount that parents must pay for those services.

Affordability of early education services is an ongoing challenge for parents with young children in New York and elsewhere across the country. One intention of the New York State legislature in passing UPK legislation was to create prekindergarten programs that would be available to families at no cost. Programs that blend funding sources (UPK funds, child care subsidies, parent fees, etc.) in order to provide full-day, full-year programs for families may be able to deliver those programs at less cost to parents when UPK funding is included in the financing mix.

**14.** A portion of Universal Prekindergarten funding is used specifically for program quality enhancement through teacher compensation, staff development, improvements in classroom environments, and family involvement efforts.

Good quality full-day, full-year child care costs more than most parents can afford to purchase through parent fees.<sup>42</sup> Universal prekindergarten services must be provided by state-certified teachers whose salaries are high enough to encourage them to remain in the teaching profession. UPK teachers require ongoing professional development training. UPK also requires family involvement and family access to comprehensive services, which imposes added costs on participating programs. The added costs of these quality investments must be financed by the universal prekindergarten program; parents cannot afford to pay higher fees for full-day, full-year child care, and participating child care centers have no other sources of funding to cover these added costs.

**15.** Policymakers and school administrators address the expansion concerns expressed by local UPK program coordinators and others involved in the provision of UPK services through discussion, planning, and allocation of additional resources.

Since UPK's inception, many concerns have been raised about the program's continuation and expansion, and whether the State has the long-term commitment to the original intent of full implementation and universality. It is imperative these concerns be addressed at all levels, so that districts can focus efforts on direct services to children rather than those needed to ensure the survival of the program. This will also help those districts hesitant about offering UPK to feel more assured that funding will continue, and hopefully increase participation by districts across the state.

<sup>42</sup> D. Gomby, N. Krantzler, M. Larner, C. Stevenson, and R. Behrman, (1996) Financing child care: analysis and recommendations. In *The Future of Children*, 6 (2), Summer/Fall. Pp. 5-25.

# Universal Prekindergarten Survey

## Section 1: About Your Program

In order to better understand your center, we ask that you please answer the following questions.

- What is your present position? Please check one.
  - Director
  - Assistant Director
  - Teacher/Director
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- What best describes your center? Please check one.
  - Child care center
  - Head Start
  - Nursery school
  - Nonpublic school
  - Family/group family child care
  - 4410 approved special education provider
  - 4410/Day Care Center - approved special education provider and child care center
  - 4410/Head Start - approved special education provider and Head Start Program
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- How long has your center been in operation? \_\_\_\_\_ years
- How many children are currently enrolled at your center? Please answer for each of the following age groups.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Infants (0-18 months)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Toddlers (18-months-3 years old)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3-year-olds
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4-year-olds
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5-year-olds
  - \_\_\_\_\_ school age (over 5 years)
- Total number of children currently enrolled \_\_\_\_\_ children
- Does your center serve any of the following groups of children? Please estimate the percent of children at your center in each group.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ % Children with special needs
  - \_\_\_\_\_ % English language learners/limited English proficiency
  - \_\_\_\_\_ % Children from economically disadvantaged families
  - \_\_\_\_\_ % Children from middle and upper income families

1

- What length of program do you offer? Check all that apply.
  - Half day (e.g., 2.5 to 3 hours)
  - School day (e.g., 9 am-3pm)
  - Full day (e.g., 7 am-6 pm)
  - Other (e.g., before and after school care)
- For what part of the year is your center open? Check one.
  - School year (Sept-June)
  - Full-year
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

## Section 2: Involvement with Universal Prekindergarten

We are interested in learning more about your center's involvement with the Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK). Please answer the following questions, so that we may better understand your center.

- In which year(s) did your center **apply** for Universal Prekindergarten funding? Please check all years, even if you were not funded.
  - 1998-1999     1999-2000     2000-2001     2001-2002
- In which year(s) has your center **actually participated** in the UPK Program? Check all that apply.
  - 1998-1999     1999-2000     2000-2001     2001-2002
- For how many children did your center receive UPK funding? Please indicate for each year.
  - number of children in 1998-1999 \_\_\_\_\_
  - number of children in 1999-2000 \_\_\_\_\_
  - number of children in 2000-2001 \_\_\_\_\_
  - number of children in 2001-2002 \_\_\_\_\_
- What type of UPK program does your center offer? Check all that apply.
  - Half day     School day     Extended day option
- Does your center provide transportation for UPK children?
  - Yes, for all UPK children     Yes, for some UPK children     No

2

- How important were the following factors in your center's decision to participate in UPK? Please circle your response using the scale below.
 

	<i>Not At All important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
a) Overall interest in UPK.....	1	2	3 4 5
b) Had space available.....	1	2	3 4 5
c) Ability to serve more children.....	1	2	3 4 5
d) Ability to increase services for infants and toddlers.....	1	2	3 4 5
e) Opportunity to lower parent fees.....	1	2	3 4 5
f) Access to support services offered by school district.....	1	2	3 4 5
g) Opportunity to improve program quality.....	1	2	3 4 5
h) Additional source of revenue.....	1	2	3 4 5

- Did your center make any changes to enhance its application to be a UPK site?
  - Yes     No
- If yes, what changes did you make? Check all that apply.
  - Certification of teachers
  - Changes in programming/curriculum
  - Hiring teachers
  - Improving facilities
  - Obtaining licenses or accreditation
  - Staff development and training
  - Change in hours of operation
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

- If you have needed to recruit children for UPK, how much difficulty have you had? Please circle your response on the scale below.
 

<i>no difficulty</i>	<i>some difficulty</i>	<i>a great deal of difficulty</i>
1	2 3 4	5

3

- If you've experienced difficulty, what may be causing this? Check all that apply.
  - Lack of transportation
  - Lack of full day/wrap around care
  - Location
  - Parents prefer other setting
  - Limited number of four-year-olds in community
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
  - No difficulties
- We are interested in any change in the composition of children served since your involvement with UPK. Has the number of children served by your center changed as a result of your involvement with UPK? Please check (✓) for each group of children whether the number has decreased, remained the same, or increased.
 

	<i>Number has decreased</i>	<i>Number has not changed</i>	<i>Number has increased</i>
a) Children with special needs			
b) English language learners			
c) Children from economically disadvantaged families			
d) Children from middle and upper income families			
e) Infants and toddlers			
f) Total children served by your program			

- If the number of infants and toddlers in your program has increased or decreased, please explain briefly.
 

\_\_\_\_\_

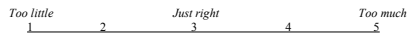
## Section 3: School-Community Collaboration

An essential component of your involvement with the Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK) is collaboration with the local school district. Please answer the following questions about this topic.

- How does the district monitor your center? Check all that apply and estimate the frequency.
  - Site visits/classroom observations (\_\_\_\_\_ times per year)
  - Telephone calls (\_\_\_\_\_ times per month)
  - Meetings (\_\_\_\_\_ times per month)
  - E-mail (\_\_\_\_\_ times per month)
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

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2. I feel the amount of monitoring is... Please circle your response on the scale below.

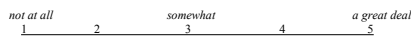


3. Please respond to the following statements using the scale below.

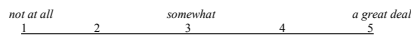
	<i>Not At All Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>		
a) I am satisfied with the communication between my center and the school district.....	1	2	3	4	5
b) My center has a good working relationship with the school district.....	1	2	3	4	5
c) The school district is willing to learn about early care and education from my center.....	1	2	3	4	5
d) I have good access to information about UPK.....	1	2	3	4	5
e) My center has had adequate opportunities for input into the way in which the school district as decided to implement UPK.....	1	2	3	4	5
f) The information requested on the Request for Proposal was fair and reasonable.....	1	2	3	4	5
g) I have regular contact with other UPK sites in my community.....	1	2	3	4	5

*Does not apply*

4. To what extent do you feel supported by the school district in how you operate your center due to being a UPK site? Please circle your response on the scale below.



5a. To what extent do you feel constraints from the school district in how you operate your center due to being a UPK site? Please circle your response on the scale below.



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5b. If your center is feeling constraints, please provide one or two examples

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 4: Teachers, Staff, and Professional Development

The teachers and staff who interact with the children each day are integral to providing a high quality program. Please answer the following questions regarding your teachers, staff, and professional development activities.

1. How many classrooms does your center have? \_\_\_\_\_ classrooms
2. How many classrooms with four-year-olds does your center have? (including mixed-age classrooms)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ UPK classrooms
  - \_\_\_\_\_ non-UPK classrooms
  - \_\_\_\_\_ classrooms with UPK and non-UPK children together
  - \_\_\_\_\_ total four-year-old classrooms
3. What is the total number of lead teachers working with four-year-olds at your center? \_\_\_\_\_ lead teachers
4. Of these lead teachers of four-year-olds, please indicate how many have the following educational credentials:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent New York State certification (ECE/K-6)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Provisional New York State certification (ECE/K-6)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Master's degree without certification
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree without certification
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Associate's degree
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Child Development Associate (CDA)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Enrolled in Study Plan (New York City)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
5. How many assistant teachers/aides work with four-year-olds at your center? \_\_\_\_\_ assistant teachers/aides
6. What is your staff:child ratio for four-year-olds? \_\_\_\_\_ staff:\_\_\_\_\_ child
7. What is average length of time your **UPK teachers** have taught at your particular center?
  - Less than 2 years
  - 2-4 years
  - 5-10 years
  - over 10 years

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8. Have you hired any additional teachers due to UPK?

- Yes (number of additional teachers \_\_\_\_\_)  No

9. Have you hired any staff other than teachers (e.g., assistant teachers, parent coordinators, bus drivers, cooks) due to UPK?

- Yes (number of additional staff \_\_\_\_\_)  No

10a. Have any of your teachers transferred into the local school district this year?

- Yes (number transferred \_\_\_\_\_)  No

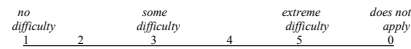
10b. If yes, why do you feel this was the case? Check all that apply.

- Higher salaries provided by school district
- Better benefits provided by school district
- To meet career goals
- Dissatisfaction with current position at your center
- To serve a different population of children
- Other (please explain \_\_\_\_\_)

11. Is there currently a shortage of ECE/K-6 certified teachers in your community?

- Yes  No

12a. How much difficulty has your center had in recruiting certified teachers? Please circle your response on the scale below.



12b. If you have had difficulty, what might explain this?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Have any teachers at your center become ECE/K-6 certified (provisional or permanent) as a result of your involvement with UPK?

- Yes (number of teachers \_\_\_\_\_)
- No, but certification in process (number of teachers \_\_\_\_\_)
- No

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14. Please indicate your feelings about the teacher certification requirement. Please check one.

- I feel no certification requirement for four-year-olds is necessary.
- I feel some certification is necessary but the current requirements are too stringent.
- I agree with the current requirements.
- I agree that stronger requirements are necessary.

15. We are interested in learning more about your center's participation in any professional development activities offered by the school district. Please indicate if you or others at your center have participated in any of the following **district-sponsored** activities and opportunities. Check all that apply.

- Conferences/workshops
- Program visitation/classroom observations
- Mentoring program
- Outside consultants
- Staff developers
- Direct supervision
- Meetings
- Literature resources/audio-visual resources

16. Who from your center participates in these professional development activities? Check all that apply.

- Director/administrator
- Assistant teachers/aides
- Teachers serving UPK children
- Teachers who do not serve UPK children
- Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

17. Have you or your staff experienced any of the following barriers to participation in district-sponsored professional development? Check all that apply.

- Substitutes not available for coverage
- Not enough notification
- Staff development activities held at inconvenient times
- Cost
- Inconvenient location
- Uncomfortable attending school district activities
- Not invited or aware
- Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

18a. Are there other types of professional development opportunities that would be helpful to you and your staff?

- Yes  No

18b. If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Section 5: Curriculum and Programming

We recognize there are a variety of ways to offer a quality early childhood experience for young children. Please answer the following questions in order to provide a clearer picture of curriculum and activities at your center.

- Is your center NAEYC accredited?
  - Yes
  - No
  - No, but application is in progress
- Was your program NAEYC accredited before your involvement with UPK?
  - Yes
  - No
  - No, but application was in progress
- Is the curriculum your center uses required by the district?
  - Yes
  - No
- 4a. Did your center make changes in curriculum as a result of UPK?
  - Yes
  - No
- 4b. If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a. To what extent has your center been able to meet the needs of children with disabilities? Please circle your response on the scale below.
 

no difficulty	some difficulty	extreme difficulty	does not apply
1	2	3	4
- 5b. If your center has had difficulties, what challenges exist? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6a. To what extent has your center been able to meet the needs of children who are English language learners (limited English proficiency)? Please circle your response on the scale below.
 

no difficulty	some difficulty	extreme difficulty	does not apply
1	2	3	4
- 6b. If your center has had difficulties, what challenges exist? \_\_\_\_\_

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- What activities does your center have in place for continuity from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten? Check all that apply.
  - Joint pre-K and kindergarten meetings and workshops for teachers/staff
  - Joint pre-K and kindergarten activities for children
  - Program visitation by children and families
  - Formal or informal information sharing
  - Cumulative folders/portfolios
  - Curriculum continuity
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- 8a. Have there been any changes in transition to kindergarten activities due to UPK?
  - Yes
  - No
- 8b. If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_
9. To what extent are families involved in the following activities at your center? Please circle your response using the scale below.
 

	Not at all Involved	Somewhat Involved	Very Involved		
a) Parent education activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
b) Family events.....	1	2	3	4	5
c) Parent-teacher conferences.....	1	2	3	4	5
d) Home visits.....	1	2	3	4	5
e) Representation on center's board.....	1	2	3	4	5
f) Classroom volunteer/aide.....	1	2	3	4	5
g) Parent surveys.....	1	2	3	4	5
h) Selection of teachers.....	1	2	3	4	5
i) Budget decisions.....	1	2	3	4	5
j) Fundraising.....	1	2	3	4	5
k) Letter writing campaigns.....	1	2	3	4	5
l) Support groups.....	1	2	3	4	5
m) Lending library/borrowing program.....	1	2	3	4	5
n) Curriculum development.....	1	2	3	4	5
o) Field trips.....	1	2	3	4	5
p) Other (Please specify _____).....	1	2	3	4	5
- 10a. Has parent involvement at your center changed due to UPK?
  - Yes
  - No
- 10b. If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Section 6: Financing

Important to our understanding of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) is the topic of financing. Please answer the following questions so that we may obtain better understanding in this area.

- From where does your center as a whole receive its funding? Please estimate the percentage of revenues received from each source.
  - \_\_\_\_ % Parent fees
  - \_\_\_\_ % Universal Prekindergarten program
  - \_\_\_\_ % Dept. of Social Services
  - \_\_\_\_ % Head Start
  - \_\_\_\_ % Non-profit agencies
  - \_\_\_\_ % ACS/ACD (Administration for Children's Services/Agency for Child Development)
  - \_\_\_\_ % United Way
  - \_\_\_\_ % USDA food program
  - \_\_\_\_ % Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- If you offer a full-day program, what would be the cost per week for a four-year-old if your center didn't receive UPK funds? \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week
- If your program provides full day or extended day care, what sources of funds are used to cover the part of the day that is not funded by UPK? Check all that apply.
  - Parent fees
  - Dept. of Social Services subsidies
  - Head Start funds
  - Non-profit agencies
  - ACS/ACD (Administration for Children's Services/Agency for Child Development)
  - Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- 4a. What is the amount of UPK funding your center has received per child this past year (2001-2002)? Please check one.
  - less than \$2000 per child
  - \$2000-\$2499 per child
  - \$2500-\$2999 per child
  - \$3000-\$3499 per child
  - \$3500-\$3999 per child
  - \$4000 or more per child
- 4b. How adequate has this amount been? Please circle your response on the scale below.
 

not at all	somewhat	completely
1	2	3

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- How have you invested your UPK funds? Please indicate if your center has used UPK funds for any of the following:
  - Building improvements
  - Adding classrooms
  - Remodeling classrooms
  - Equipment (including computers)
  - Educational materials
  - Hiring assistant teachers/aides
  - Hiring teachers
  - Hiring support staff (including family workers)
  - Hiring substitute teachers to facilitate teacher participation in professional development
  - Hiring staff developers or curriculum specialists
  - Hiring social workers
  - Increasing teacher salaries
  - Increasing salaries of assistant teachers/aides and support staff
  - Providing tuition assistance to help teachers become certified
  - Lowering parent fees
  - Field trips
  - Transportation
  - Extending hours services are available to children
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- 6a. Does your center have a multi-year contract with the school district?
  - Yes
  - No
- 6b. If yes, for how many years? \_\_\_\_\_ years
- 6c. How beneficial has this been for your center? Please circle your response on the scale below.
 

not at all	somewhat beneficial	very beneficial
1	2	3
- 7a. When does your center begin receiving payments for UPK from the school district? Please check one.
  - At the beginning of the school year
  - Within the first month of the beginning of the school year
  - Within two to three months of the beginning of the school year
  - After the first three months of the beginning of the school year
  - Unpredictable
  - Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

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7b. How adequate has this schedule been for your center? Please circle your response on the scale below.

not at all somewhat completely  
 1 2 3 4 5

- 8a. Have parent fees been reduced at your center due to UPK?  
 Yes  No  We do not charge parent fees
- 8b. If yes, please indicate the amount parent fees are reduced:  
 Fully  
 Partially  
 Fees reduced by less than 5%  
 Fees reduced by 5-9%  
 Fees reduced by 10-24%  
 Fees reduced by 25-49%  
 Fees reduced by 50% or more  
 Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
9. Is the total amount of money available to your center higher as a result of UPK?  
 Yes  No
10. If your center provides infant and toddler care, is the cost subsidized by fees from services to older children?  
 Yes  No  Our center does not serve infants and toddlers

**Now we would like to ask some questions about teacher salaries.**

11. What is the average annual salary of all lead teachers who work at your center?  
 Under \$20,000  
 \$20,000-24,999  
 \$25,000-29,999  
 \$30,000-34,999  
 \$35,000-\$39,999  
 over \$40,000
12. What is the average annual salary of the lead UPK teachers who work at your center?  
 Under \$20,000  
 \$20,000-24,999  
 \$25,000-29,999  
 \$30,000-34,999  
 \$35,000-\$39,999  
 over \$40,000

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13. What factors influence the salaries your teachers are paid? Check all that apply.

- State certification (ECE/K-6)
- Other certification (Special education, bilingual)
- Level of education
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Years of experience at your center
- Years of experience in prekindergarten classrooms
- Whether or not they serve UPK children
- Special skills (expertise in dealing with diverse families, working with children with special needs, bilingual)
- Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

14. What employee benefits do prekindergarten teachers at your center receive? Check all that apply.

- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Retirement plan
- Paid vacation
- Paid sick/personal days
- Child care (free or reduced fees)
- Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

15a. Have teacher salaries increased at your center due to UPK?

- Yes
- No

15b. If yes, please indicate the average amount teacher salaries have increased:

- Salaries increased less than 5%
- Salaries increased 5-9%
- Salaries increased 10-14%
- Salaries increased 15-19%
- Salaries increased 20% or more

15c. For whom have salaries increased? Please check one.

- All teachers
- All certified teachers
- All UPK teachers
- All certified UPK teachers

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**Section 7: UPK Impacts and Evaluation**

**We are interested in any potential impacts on your center as a result of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK), your concerns about UPK, and your overall level of satisfaction with UPK. Please answer the following questions.**

1. What changes have taken place at your center as a result of UPK? On this scale, please rate each of the following possible changes.
- |   | <i>No<br/>Change</i> | <i>Some<br/>Change</i> | <i>Great Deal<br/>of Change</i> |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) Greater focus on developmentally appropriate practices.....                            | 1                    | 2                      | 3                               |
| b) Improved assessment measures and techniques.....                                       | 1                    | 2                      | 3                               |
| c) Improved access to support services for children and families.....                     | 1                    | 2                      | 3                               |
| d) Greater sharing of resources with school district.....                                 | 1                    | 2                      | 3                               |
| e) Increase in communication among community-based early care and education programs..... | 1                    | 2                      | 3                               |
2. Are you aware of any community based programs that have closed as a result of UPK?  
 Yes (# of programs \_\_\_\_\_)  No
3. Are you aware of any community-based programs that have opened or expanded as a result of UPK?  
 Yes (# of programs \_\_\_\_\_)  No
4. As UPK continues in the years ahead, to what extent are you concerned about the following issues? Please circle your response using the scale below.

	<i>Not at all Concerned</i>	<i>Somewhat Concerned</i>	<i>Very Concerned</i>
a) Having enough space.....	1	2	3
b) Having adequate funding.....	1	2	3
c) Continuation of UPK by the state.....	1	2	3
d) Continuation of contract with school district.....	1	2	3
e) Competition for four-year-olds with other centers.....	1	2	3
f) Competition for four-year-olds with the school district.....	1	2	3
g) Losing certified teachers to the school district.....	1	2	3
h) Meeting the needs of parents who work full-time.....	1	2	3
i) Loss of autonomy.....	1	2	3

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j) Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)  
 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the UPK program? Please circle your response on the scale below.

not at all satisfied somewhat satisfied very satisfied  
 1 2 3 4 5

Please feel free to add any additional comments about your experience with UPK that have not been addressed by this survey.

**You are now finished with the survey.  
 Thank you so much for your time and cooperation!**

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# About the Authors



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## Dr. Kristi Lekies

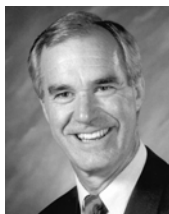
Dr. Kristi Lekies is the Associate Director of the Cornell Early Childhood Program. Her responsibilities consist of program administration, coordination of research projects, grant writing, data analysis and management, publications and presentations, and supervision of student research. Along with universal prekindergarten and early care and education, Dr. Lekies research interests also include rural families, community and environmental influences on human development, and cross-cultural perspectives on children and families. She holds a Ph.D. in human development and family studies from Iowa State University, a master's degree in home economics from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her background includes research in the former East Germany as a Fulbright scholar, as well as work in the areas of foster care, child abuse and neglect, and independent living skills education for adolescents.



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## Taryn W. Morrissey

Taryn Morrissey is a graduate student in the Department of Human Development at Cornell University. Ms. Morrissey is interested in early childhood policy and the work/family interface, particularly for low-income families. In addition to universal prekindergarten, her research interests include work supports for low-income families and linking child care and economic development. In her graduate research, she is investigating the unintended consequences of early care and education policies. Ms. Morrissey earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and Child Development from Tufts University, in Medford, MA, and her master's degree in Human Development and Family Studies at Cornell University.



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## Dr. Moncrieff Cochran

Dr. Moncrieff Cochran studies the environmental systems affecting parent and child development, including early care and education settings and personal social networks. He uses the findings from this research and the work of others to develop empowerment-oriented ECE and family support programs. Cochran received his bachelor's degree in social relations from Harvard College, and master's and Ph.D. degrees in psychology and education from the University of Michigan. In

1990 he and his colleagues published *Extending Families: the Social Networks of Parents and their Children* (Cambridge University Press), which presents the findings from 10 years of social network research. His edited volume *The International Handbook of Child Care Policies and Programs*, based on case studies from 29 nations, was published by Greenwood Press in 1993. In 1997, he and his wife Eva published *Child Care that Works: A Parent's Guide to Finding Quality Child Care* (Robins Lane Press/Gryphon House). Dr. Cochran is presently completing *Finding Our Way: American Early Care and Education in Global Perspective*, which provides a philosophical framework and policy recommendations for U.S. early care and education in the 21st century. He recently served as a board member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

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## About the Cornell Early Childhood Program

The Cornell Early Childhood Program is a network of Cornell faculty and staff, other university faculty, policy-makers, and practitioners linked together through their interest in young children and their families.

The mission of the program is to integrate applied research with teaching, extension outreach, and demonstration in ways that promote greater understanding of young children and their families, and contribute to policies and practices that enhance child growth and development.

Five activity areas of focus are:

- Early development, care and education of children from low-income families
- Early childhood care and education as universal family and community needs
- Family support in the child care context
- Integration of early childhood care and education strategies
- International exchange and comparison in the early childhood arena

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