

# Growing Up NYC

## A Policy Framework



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Mayor Bill de Blasio**

Richard R. Buery, Jr.  
Deputy Mayor for  
Strategic Policy Initiatives

**NYC**  
Children's Cabinet



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Dear New Yorker,

Almost four out of ten of us—three million people—is a child or young adult. The young people of our city reflect its vibrant diversity. They live in every neighborhood; are raised in every kind of family; and trace their roots to every corner of the globe. One thing they have in common: they are our future.

As a father and the mayor of a city that stands as a beacon of inclusion and opportunity, I recognize our duty as a city to ensure each and every one of our children can achieve their full potential no matter their address, citizenship status, gender, race, sexuality, or the size of their bank account.

That's why our Children's Cabinet has developed Growing Up NYC. It's a way to understand what our children need and track our efforts to meet those needs. It will serve as a foundation for City leaders and agencies as they create policies and programs to invest in our young people from the minute they're born to the age of 24. Our goal is to care for our children's physical and mental health, social and emotional growth, education, and readiness to enter the adult world of work.

My administration has already made significant investments to uplift all our young people and their families, from launching pre-K for All and expanding afterschool programs to creating

130 Community Schools and paid parental leave for 20,000 City employees. But we have more to do.

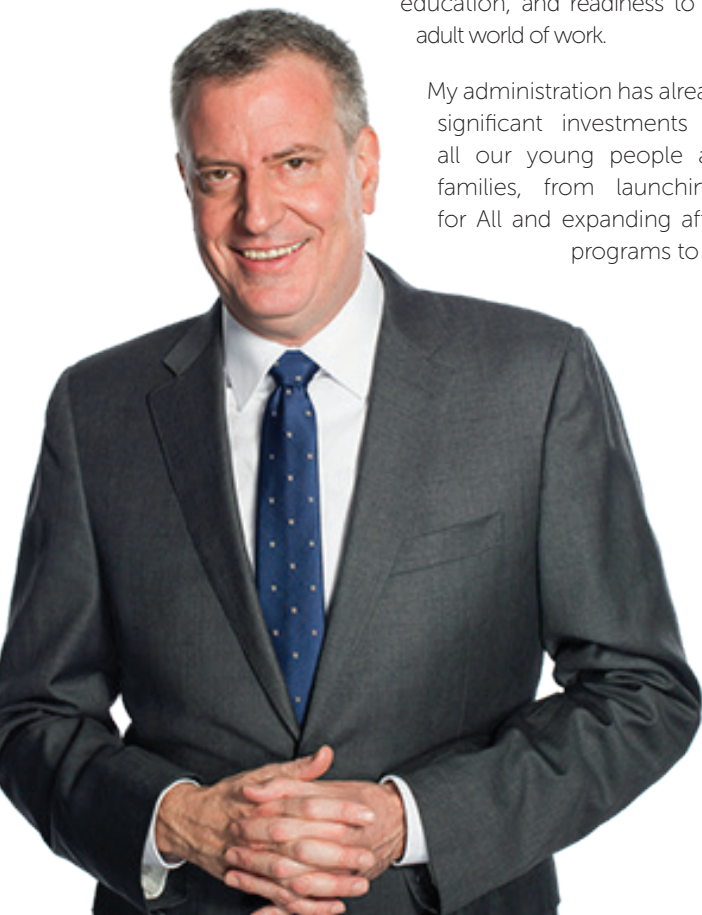
The ideas in Growing Up NYC were developed from hundreds of hours of meetings, visits, and other interactions with families and communities in all five boroughs—and we're not stopping now. As our efforts to support the city's young people unfold, we'll keep talking to New York City to continually inform our understanding of what young New Yorkers need.

No one said growing up is easy. But it's our job, as parents and policymakers, to ensure that all New York City's families and children are as healthy and happy as they can be.

Sincerely,

*Bill de Blasio*

Mayor Bill de Blasio



Dear New Yorker,

Mayor Bill de Blasio is committed to making New York City the best big city in America for children by shaping a city that is stronger, safer, and more equitable for all.

Multiple agencies serve the city's children and youth, and have a responsibility to collaborate with one another to keep them safe and help them grow into healthy and happy adults. Driven by this belief, in April 2014, following the tragic death of four-year-old Myls Dobson, the mayor created the Children's Cabinet and appointed me its chair to drive the development of a unified vision and strategy to support the well-being of New York City's children.

The Children's Cabinet has made positive strides over the past two years to increase agency collaboration to tackle the most pressing issues affecting our children. We have regularly convened our 24 agencies to identify and implement solutions to bureaucratic and legal obstacles that sometimes stand in the way of agencies collaborating to provide the best services to children and their families. We have also launched a number of programmatic initiatives, including a campaign called Talk to Your Baby that promotes early language and brain development, and child-caregiver attachment; and NYC Baby Showers that provides resources and establishes links to essential services that City and community groups provide for children ages 0-3.

When the Children's Cabinet considered our next phase of work, we knew that we needed to articulate a policy approach around child well-being that could strategically guide City agencies as they identify programs and services in which to invest. Toward this aim, we developed the Growing Up NYC policy framework to:

- Provide a clear vision around child well-being that highlights relevant work the City is doing;
- Develop a course of action aimed at fostering evidence-based models and investments that

have a demonstrated impact on supporting child well-being and that also cut across agencies;

- Develop a shared understanding of which factors hinder and which factors promote children and youth's successful path to adulthood; and
- Foster ongoing dialogue about what we need to do to continue the positive strides we are making for our children.

To inform Growing Up NYC's content, we collaborated with Children's Cabinet agencies, in addition to youth, parents, and community leaders.

We look forward to having New York City families work in parallel with their city government to ensure that Growing Up NY City is a living tool that empowers them to successfully usher their children through the major transitions of their lives on the path to adulthood.

Sincerely,

*Richard R. Buery, Jr.*

Deputy Mayor Richard Buery, Jr.







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Executive Director, NYC Children's Cabinet

# The Children's Cabinet

The **NYC Children's Cabinet**, a multi-agency initiative created by Mayor Bill de Blasio to bolster communication and coordination among City agencies that serve children, provides a space to identify and analyze individual and common areas of work that impact child safety and well-being. The Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives, Richard Buery, chairs the Children's Cabinet, and commissioners and directors from 24 City agencies and mayoral offices comprise its members. Benita Miller serves as its founding Executive Director.

The Children's Cabinet promotes collaboration among its member agencies in order to improve the cumulative impact of our services on youth and their families. Its goals are to:

- Focus on child safety and well-being within the context of healthy families and communities;
- Leverage each agency's leadership to promote synergies between agency staff and remove barriers to collaboration;
- Promote ongoing, consistent, and meaningful communication among City agency leadership; and
- Take a holistic approach, promoting policies that establish a system of resources and linkages that target the city's neediest neighborhoods.





**New York City** is home to almost three million children, youth, and young adults under the age of 24. These young New Yorkers reflect the enormous diversity of our city: they come from all socioeconomic levels, ethnicities, and a wide variety of family structures. Young New Yorkers attend many different kinds of educational institutions—from community-based early childhood centers to local colleges and universities—and, in the case of young adults, work in an array of jobs.

The vast majority of these young New Yorkers have caring adults, in their families and communities, to guide and support them on their path to adulthood—and to help them achieve their hopes and dreams.

The City also has high aspirations for its young people, and it is committed to helping all of them thrive and succeed. To make this vision a reality, and to coordinate the disparate efforts currently underway, Mayor de Blasio charged his Children’s Cabinet with developing a shared vision for meeting the needs of the city’s children, youth, and young adults.



Acting on this mandate, the 24 agencies and mayoral offices that are part of the Children’s Cabinet began working collaboratively in the Fall of 2015 to assess the range of programs and initiatives working to meet the needs of children and their families. The Children’s Cabinet set out to identify opportunities to better coordinate programs and reduce overlapping initiatives. This process included gathering input from external stakeholders, including education and youth development leaders, parents, caregivers, and young people from across the city. Ultimately, these Children’s Cabinet agencies and offices will develop a course of action, supported by available research and outcome data, to prioritize necessary investments, cross-agency program development, and resource sharing.

### Our work proceeds from three basic principles

#### 1. Child Development Should Be Considered on a 0-24 Continuum

An increasing body of evidence supports the idea that child development is shaped from before birth and continues well past adolescence, as young people’s brains continue to develop. The City should partner with parents, families, and communities to address young people at every stage of this 0-24 age continuum, providing them with the resources and supports they need to meet major cognitive, social-emotional, and physical milestones.

#### 2. Children Need Support and Opportunities in Multiple Environments

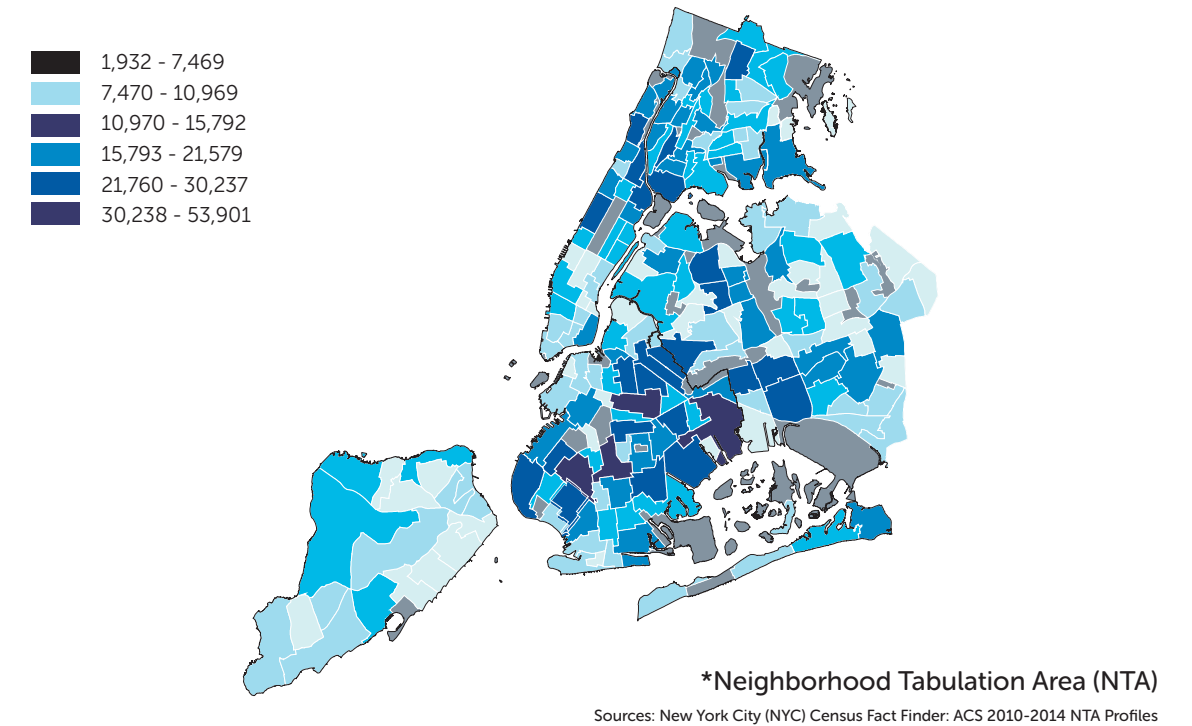
Children’s development takes place in various environments, including their homes, schools, and neighborhoods. These environments may vary in importance over time, and often overlap and blend into each other. The City must consider all of these environments and appropriately support children in each.

#### 3. Measures of Accountability

The City will hold itself accountable by keeping track of key investments and policies to evaluate the degree to which we’ve succeeded in meeting the needs of the city’s children.



### Population of Children and Youth Ages 0-24 by Neighborhood\*



The Children’s Cabinet’s policy framework contains a number of key elements that will inform City policies, agency practices, and program development:

- 1. Guiding Principles:** A set of eight core beliefs and values to shape agency work;
- 2. Universal Risk & Protective Factors:** These factors are critical to understanding the balance required to meet the developmental needs of children, youth, and young adults;
- 3. Age-Graded Transitions:** A series of developmental milestones that we hope children will successfully meet over the course of their lives;
- 4. Program Spotlights:** Comprehensive “spotlights” of relevant investments and programs to highlight the City’s work on these issues; and
- 5. Well-Being Indicators:** Selected indicators that will be measured to assess the City’s progress to goals.

The framework also informs the creation of important resources for the Children’s Cabinet and its agencies, including:

- 1. Publicly available tools for NYC families that outline information for parents and caregivers about City resources, and**
- 2. A tool Children’s Cabinet agency leaders can use to analyze the impact and value of their agency investments in programs and services which, in turn, can promote a more informed agency investment strategy.**



## Guiding Principles

**The City's work on behalf of young New Yorkers proceeds from a simple vision:** all children should grow up in healthy, safe, and supportive environments, and have the opportunity to grow into successful and fulfilled adults. When children are given the support they need to thrive, all of society benefits and our city is made stronger long into the future.

Toward that end, in partnership with dozens of leaders from City agencies, as well as community-based organizations providing a wide range of services to children, youth, and young adults, the Children's Cabinet has articulated a set of guiding principles.

**City agency policies and programs should be planned and implemented in order to:**

- 1 Support children throughout the interconnected 0-24 age spectrum**
  - Address the immediate needs of children, youth, and young adults with a concerted focus on the subsequent stages of growth.
  - Strengthen their capacity to build the skills and competencies they will need to succeed in all aspects of their lives.
- 2 Adopt a holistic approach, supporting the "whole child"**
  - Focus on the holistic developmental needs of children, youth, and young adults.
  - Consider their health and well-being, social, emotional, and educational growth in order to support a positive transition to adulthood.
- 3 Support families and sustain home life**
  - Recognize that strong families are foundational to young people's success.
  - Provide parents and caregivers with information, opportunities, and resources to support their children in becoming self-sufficient, happy adults.

- 4 Promote child-centered communities**
  - Provide safe spaces and opportunities for children and families to engage in recreation, social engagement, and community-building activities.
  - Engage the community and provide ongoing, consistent outreach about the City's programming and supports for children.
- 5 Leverage and align resources and programming**
  - Align and sequence agencies' programming to reduce inefficiencies, increase access to programming, identify and address gaps in services, and intensify positive outcomes for children, youth, and young adults.
  - Identify opportunities to develop new programs or share resources to better meet the needs of specific populations.
- 6 Invest in evidence-informed practices and interventions**
  - Prioritize public investments in programs that have a proven positive impact on young people.
  - Support research and evaluation of new efforts, with a focus on identifying best practice models for New York City and beyond.
- 7 Innovate with new models that cut across silos**
  - Seek innovative and fiscally efficient ways to address persistent unmet needs and challenges for children, youth, and young adults.
  - Eliminate long-standing bureaucratic barriers that do not serve the interests of children.
- 8 Connect government and constituents in new ways**
  - Bring City services to the people, connecting them with government where they live, work, and play.
  - Leverage both technology and direct person-to-person outreach.





## Introduction to the Charge

In these complex times, it is harder than ever to gauge the status and well-being of a city's children. The City of New York is home to almost three million children, youth, and young adults. More than one million attend the City's schools, including approximately 70,000 children in Pre-K for All, and many more are enrolled in elementary, middle, or high school. Many ultimately enter training programs, pursue higher education opportunities, or enter the workforce. We recognize that each child has individual talents and particular needs—and that those talents and needs constantly change.

**Growing Up NYC** describes how a dynamic city like New York can best promote the well-being of its children. It is designed to ensure that the time, resources, and effort committed to raising the city's children lifts them up to the fullest extent possible.

**Growing Up NYC** has three parts. The first addresses what we mean by child well-being. If we are going to meet our ambitious goals for the city's children, it is important that parents, families, and communities throughout the city understand what we mean when we talk about the importance of child well-being.

Second, we examine the factors that impact well-being. These include risk factors that impair well-being and the protective factors that promote it. Not all negative factors affecting children can be eliminated. Rather, we want to ensure that influences promoting well-being outweigh those that work against it, and that children are given appropriate support for handling adverse factors.

Finally, we discuss the policies that play a central role in supporting children, their families, and communities on their path to well-being. For the City to effectively play its part there must be policies and programs that promote healthy childhood development. Risk factors, natural and manmade, abound in New York City, as do protective factors for children, their families, and their communities. Government must work with families and communities to find the right way to tip the balance between risk and protective factors to favor healthier outcomes.



## Human Capital

It is important to have a clear vision of what we mean when we talk about the well-being of a child. This term has several important components, including physical health, behavioral health, and cognitive functioning. We want children to be healthy and emotionally engaged with their families, schools, and communities.

For children to succeed in these areas and move seamlessly from childhood to adulthood, they need to develop necessary “human capital”—a set of skills that help them navigate their way through life. If we want to know how children are doing, we have to understand what these skills are. Moreover, we must monitor whether—and how well—they are being acquired. The idea of human capital takes a dynamic view of this process, with an emphasis on how skills are developed, or not developed, over time.

The Growing Up NYC framework proceeds from two additional assumptions. First, it sees human development as a series of transitions. Some are

biologically based (e.g., puberty) and others are socially constructed, such as school graduation dates. Second, it sees well-being as strongly influenced by how a child navigates these transitions, and it views the progress a child makes as cumulative: skills build on each other and enable children to continue to grow and move through subsequent transitions. While children develop at different rates, especially in the early years, teachers, parents, and other caregivers can support each child in continuing to develop and grow toward key milestones.

The developmental path is longer than it might appear: there is a growing body of research showing that a child’s development begins before birth and continues well beyond adolescence. The City is committed to addressing the needs of children throughout this 0-24 continuum, working in partnership with parents, families, and communities to provide the resources and supports that young people need to acquire essential skills at every stage of their development.

This framework emphasizes six key transitional periods in the life of a child.



**BIRTH**  
The Transition  
to Infancy



**PRE-SCHOOL**  
The Transition to  
Organized Social Settings



**KINDERGARTEN**  
The Transition to  
Elementary School



**PRE-TEEN YEARS**  
The Transition to  
Middle School



**ADOLESCENCE**  
The Transition to High School



**EMERGING ADULTHOOD**  
The Transition to  
College and/or Work



We want to ensure that every child in the city has the resources they need at each of these critical junctures to move on to the next stage of development. To do this, we must have a clear conception of what a child needs at each point to succeed—and information about the quality of educational and other services children receive. Additionally, we recognize the fundamental role of caregivers throughout this process, and continue to support policies and programs that bolster their well-being. High-quality public programs that invest in the city’s families provide a multiplier investment in its children, as well. When looking at kindergarteners, for example, we want to know not only whether their kindergarten experience is going well, but what skills they need to acquire to move on to first grade, and ultimately succeed at that level (and beyond). We want to know if caregivers qualify for public health care, paid sick leave, and educational support services, and utilize those programs to further their own development and in turn benefit their children. At each phase, we outline key cognitive skills, social-emotional

skills, and experiences that promote a child’s ability to successfully navigate toward adulthood. For the first three transitional periods (birth through the transition to elementary school) we also note the physical (motor) skills that children need to develop.

We have identified two categories of risk and protective factors. Universal factors transcend any given life stage and are salient at every point along the developmental trajectory. Other factors are uniquely associated with a particular transitional phase—for example, considerations that are particularly relevant during the teenage years (high school).

In the sections that follow, we begin by discussing the universal risks and protective factors that apply to children throughout their development. Then we move on to discuss factors associated with specific transitional phases, particularly focused on those which are likely to either impede or hasten the acquisition of essential skills, knowledge, or experiences at those specific points.



City programs that support the healthy development and well-being of New York City’s children.



## Universal Risk & Protective Factors

Children are in constant interaction with their environment: parents, friends, school, community, culture, macroeconomic forces, and so on.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes these interactions are protective: they serve to promote child development. In other cases, these interactions hinder a child's ability to reach their full potential. This policy framework focuses on three levels of influence: individual factors (those specific to the child himself or herself); family factors (those specific to the family, often with particular focus on parents); and community factors (factors which largely have to do with particular neighborhood characteristics and services). To be sure, there are many other levels of influence to be considered. The perspective taken here, though, is that the City is best positioned to intervene and provide support at these three levels: individual, family, and community.

In this section we focus on the risk and protective factors that apply across a child's development, from birth through emerging adulthood.



### Individual Factors

**PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Physically healthy children are better able to succeed in adulthood. Promoting children's health can improve academic performance, help children thrive socially, and increase their economic self-sufficiency.<sup>2</sup>

**EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:** Emotionally healthy children are more likely to enter school ready to learn, excel in the classroom, and have good physical health; they are less likely to be involved in crime; and they are likely to have higher overall levels of social well-being.<sup>3</sup>

### Family Factors

#### POVERTY

Living in concentrated and protracted poverty often interferes with a child's ability to acquire the skills they need to succeed in adulthood. Poverty has been shown to have a negative effect on physical and mental health, the ability to think and learn, as well as the development of personal relationships and community engagement, among other important aspects of life.<sup>4</sup>

#### HOUSING

Housing insecurity—defined as housing costs that are out of proportion to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhoods, overcrowding, or homelessness—is linked to poor outcomes across many domains. These include the ability to manage stress, focus in school, develop relationships with caregivers and others, and experience quality sleep. Unstable housing also increases the risk of various negative health outcomes because of inconsistent health care, and additionally makes it difficult for children to consistently stay in school. Homelessness can have a devastating impact on a child's ability to learn, develop skills, and grow.<sup>5</sup>

#### FOOD & NUTRITION

When children and their families do not have consistent access to nutritious food, it becomes harder to learn, feel safe, form strong relationships, and meet developmental milestones. Research shows that children and families who lack food security are much more likely to experience negative outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

#### CHILD MALTREATMENT

Maltreatment can lead to numerous physical, psychological, behavioral, and social-emotional problems for children. These include improper brain development, physical injuries, chronic diseases, psychiatric disorders, and death. Maltreatment can interrupt a child's ability to learn, grow, and gain skills to become a productive adult member of society.<sup>7</sup>

#### SAFETY IN THE HOME

Exposure to violence in the home can have serious consequences for children, including increased risk for emotional and behavioral problems such as post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, depression, and difficulties in academic and social settings. Children who are exposed to domestic violence when they are young are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of domestic violence in adulthood.<sup>8</sup>

#### SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Substance misuse can make it difficult for parents and caregivers to provide consistent and effective care for their children. Research shows that parental substance misuse can put children at an increased risk of the following negative outcomes: poor cognitive, social, and emotional development; mental health problems like depression and anxiety; physical health problems; and substance misuse later in life.<sup>9</sup>

#### MENTAL HEALTH

Parental mental illness can increase a child's risk of developing behavioral, social, emotional, and educational problems. Mental illness can make it harder for a parent to bond, communicate, and engage with their child, processes that are all important for development. Furthermore, children with mentally ill parents have an increased risk of developing mental health problems themselves.<sup>10</sup>





**PARENTAL INCARCERATION.** Having an incarcerated parent can have a negative impact on a child's mental health, social-emotional well-being, and educational achievement. Separation due to a parent's incarceration can be as painful as other forms of parental loss, and can create additional burdens because of the stigma and a reduction in economic and social support that often accompany it.<sup>11</sup>

**FAMILY STRUCTURE.** Children have the best chance of succeeding when they have the support of loving parents and/or primary caregivers. Being raised by a single parent who does not benefit from a supportive family network often correlates to reduced levels of economic and emotional support. Additionally, given the economic and emotional stress often experienced by single heads of households, children in these homes might have increases in cognitive, emotional, and social problems, which often peak early in life but can continue into adulthood.<sup>12</sup>



#### **CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS PROGRAM (ACS, DOC)**

This collaborative initiative facilitates parent-child visits and case conferences for incarcerated youth in foster care, as well as other children who are in foster care or have an open preventive case. The Department of Correction provides necessary clearances and coordination to ensure children and their guardians or caseworkers are able to visit with the parent, sibling, or a child within the Department's custody.



#### **THE FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE (DYCD)**

The Fatherhood Initiative helps non-custodial fathers connect with their children and develop essential parenting skills. The initiative works with fathers on 1) increasing engagement and responsibility in relationships with their children; and 2) providing financial and other forms of support to their children. It offers three program options: young fathers aged 16-24, fathers older than 24, and fathers with prior involvement in the criminal justice system. The initiative focuses on five core areas: parenting skills development, effective co-parenting, employment/education, child support, and child visitation/placement. It provides participants with up to six months of case management, and follow-up services, as needed, for up to one year.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION.** When parents and caregivers are involved in their child's education—communicating with teachers, participating in school events, helping with homework, and encouraging study—children benefit. Research indicates that parental involvement can promote student academic achievement for children of all ages, in all subject areas, and regardless of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, or race.<sup>13</sup>

**IMMIGRATION STATUS.** Having an undocumented immigration status can make it more difficult to navigate the City's educational, health care, and financial systems, important institutions with which families regularly interact.<sup>14</sup>





## Community Factors

**COMMUNITY VIOLENCE AND CRIME.** Children who live in communities with high rates of violence and crime might experience neurological, physical, emotional, and social challenges that severely interrupt their development. Such environments can have a negative impact on a child's cognitive performance and ability to pay attention, even if they do not directly witness a crime or violence. Children of various ages are affected differently, but all children and families are at risk of adverse consequences.<sup>15</sup>

**HEALTH CARE SERVICES.** Children benefit in all aspects of their development from access to health care, including preventative care that is comprehensive, continuous, family-centered, and culturally sensitive.<sup>16</sup>

**MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES.** Millions of children in the United States are affected by mental health problems, with low-income children suffering disproportionately. Because these problems can have long-lasting effects into adolescence and adulthood, sound mental and behavioral health care plays a critical role in healthy child development.<sup>17</sup>

**SAFE RECREATIONAL/COMMUNITY SPACES.** As children and youth learn how to engage with the world around them, safe and accessible spaces for recreation and socialization can play an important role in their development. These environments are linked to increased physical activity and better health, as well as improved mental well-being and increased opportunity for positive social interaction. They also help to increase a child's connection to their community.<sup>18</sup>

**INTERNET ACCESS.** High-speed internet is an essential service that New Yorkers depend on to communicate, learn, make a living, socialize, and access important goods and services. Internet access is just as critical for children, youth, and young adults as it is for other New Yorkers, and it plays an important role in helping their development and preparation for adulthood.<sup>19</sup>

**COMMUNITY REGARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.** Racism, sexual discrimination, homophobia, and other forms of bias and discrimination all have an adverse effect on the healthy growth and development of children and young people. For example, research shows that experiencing racism is connected to poor physical and mental health outcomes. Additionally, experiencing sexism has detrimental effects on well-being and career outcomes. Homophobia, similarly, can lower health and well-being and increase the risk of suicide and poor school outcomes. Children and young people have a much greater chance at success and healthy development when they live in societies and communities that emphasize respect and human rights over discrimination.<sup>20</sup>



### CURE VIOLENCE (DOHMH, NYC Health + Hospitals)

Cure Violence is an evidence-based violence prevention program that works with communities facing high levels of gun violence. It enlists people from the community who have cultural awareness and skills to act as "credible messengers" of an anti-violence message. The program focuses on behavioral change among youth facing the highest risk of victimization and perpetration, and works to change community norms around violence.



### NEXT STEPS (DOP)

An initiative of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, Next STEPS is a group mentoring program for young adults aged 16 to 24 who are involved in serious violent activity (including domestic violence), and/or gang affiliated, and reside in or near targeted NYCHA housing developments across the city. Its goal is to help participants improve problem-solving and social skills, and achieve behavioral changes that will help them avoid being drawn into criminal activity—instead reengaging in education and the workforce.



### THE COMMUNITY PARKS INITIATIVE (Parks)

The Community Parks Initiative supports quality parks and public space in low-income, growing, and high-density neighborhoods across the city, while also promoting a Parks Without Borders strategy to enhance New Yorkers' access to parks in their neighborhoods. By investing in parks with the greatest needs, this initiative engages communities to create thriving public places.



### BROADBAND TASK FORCE (Mayor's Office, Department of Information Technology and Communications)

This task force serves as an advisory body composed of experts in broadband technology, real estate development, venture capital, and digital equity. The City is working to expand access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband service to all residents and businesses by 2025. The City has already begun making free broadband access available in repurposed pay phones through the LinkNYC program, and has launched an initiative to make free broadband available to 15,000 NYCHA residents.





## The Transition to Infancy

Starting at birth, children begin accumulating skills related to learning, talking, playing, behaving, and managing their feelings. In fact, we now know that conditions that prevail before birth, including the mother's health and well-being, can have an important effect on childhood development. Before a child is born, a mother's access to health care, nutritious food, and a safe environment are all important. Afterward, healthy food, quality health care, and a stimulating home environment are important to optimal child development.

We know that infancy is a time of intense discovery and rapid growth for babies—and a time of significant learning for parents. Starting at birth, infants are driven by instinct and begin to explore their environments through sight and touch in order to make sense of the world and their place in it, relative to the other people around them. The first few months of life are characterized by rapid brain development as well as motor skills. A baby's brain doubles in size during

the first year of life and forms synapses at a faster rate than at any other time over their lifespan. Parents and caregivers have a tremendous impact on this stage of rapid growth and development, especially in supporting their children's ability to form relationships and develop language. In the section below, we highlight the array of skills that are important for children to develop and the experiences they should have during this critical stage.

**BIRTH**





## SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

Babies' earliest interactions with the world prepare them for the development that follows. For this reason, the skills that they acquire at this early stage are particularly important. Although the City does not track population trend data around cognitive and motor skills development for our youngest New Yorkers, the Children's Cabinet will nonetheless work to promote ways to capture data essential to the City's programming and investments for this group.<sup>21</sup>

### Physical Skills

**Motor skills.** This category relates to a baby's ability to use his or her muscles to intentionally perform specific acts. During the first six months of life, babies are increasingly able to use their bodies, and these simple motions are ones that they build on as they move on to more complex motor skills.

### Cognitive Skills

**Language acquisition.** This skill is the process by which a baby acquires the capacity to perceive and comprehend language and use sounds to communicate. At this stage, the use of language includes cooing, babbling, and responding to sounds with other sounds or sounds and actions that lay the groundwork for future language abilities.

### Social-Emotional Skills

**Secure attachment.** This skill refers to the bond between a baby and their caregiver that allows the baby to feel safe and supported. Babies who have secure attachment are comforted by the presence of their primary caregiver(s) and turn to them when distressed. Separation anxiety is normal for this stage of life, and babies may be visibly upset when separated from their primary caregiver(s).<sup>22</sup>

**Self-regulation.** Babies are born with some ability to self-regulate, but they cannot always control strong feelings. At this stage, babies can do some basic self-soothing (such as using a pacifier or holding a soft blanket), but they need support from their parents/caregivers to manage their needs and emotions. Babies slowly develop the ability to self-regulate over time.<sup>23</sup>

### Experiences

**Nurturing, predictable interactions with primary caregivers.** Loving and supportive relationships between babies and their caregivers build and strengthen babies' brain architecture, form the foundation for secure attachments, and create a supportive environment for the development of babies' other skills and abilities.<sup>24</sup>

## RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

We have identified key individual- and family-level factors that influence the healthy development of babies, as well as some of the City's efforts to address those factors to help ensure that babies have the strongest possible start in life.

### Individual Factors\*

**Low birth weight.** Poor health at birth, of which low birth weight is an important indicator, has been shown to interfere with healthy development. Low birth weight has been linked to poorer educational outcomes, poorer economic outcomes, and poorer later-life health outcomes.<sup>25</sup>

### Family Factors\*\*

**Prenatal exposure to toxins/substances.** Children exposed to harmful substances in utero are at increased risk of learning and behavioral problems. The effects of prenatal exposure to toxins and the damage this exposure does to a child's developing brain have been found to extend beyond the early developmental years.<sup>26</sup>

**Medical care.** Research has consistently shown the value of prenatal care on birth outcomes, as well as on children's cognitive development, educational achievement, and later-life health outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

**Breastfeeding.** Breastfeeding has been linked to both short- and longer-term positive child developmental outcomes in such areas as health, motor skill development, and cognitive functioning. Top national and international health organizations recommend exclusively breastfeeding infants until the age of six months for the best health outcomes for both mothers and children.<sup>28 29</sup>



\*The Universal Individual Factors that affect the development of babies are: physical health and emotional & behavioral health. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*The Universal Family Factors that affect the development of babies are: poverty, housing, food & nutrition, child maltreatment, safety in the home, substance misuse, mental health, parental incarceration, family structure, parental involvement in education, and immigration status. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.





**Safe sleep practices.** During the last two decades, researchers have made progress in understanding Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and the infant-sleep related mechanisms through which SIDS occurs. Although infant sleep practices are often linked to cultural roots, there is wide consensus around many strategies to mitigate the risks of SIDS.<sup>30</sup> The City has made efforts to promote safe sleep practices to reduce the risk of injury or death to babies due to co-sleeping.

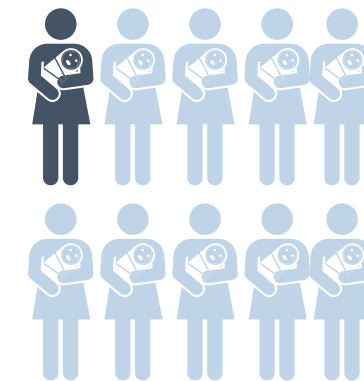
**Healthy/secure attachment to caregiver.** Early, secure attachments to caring adults, starting in infancy, are vital to helping babies grow emotionally, develop social skills, become more comfortable taking risks, and develop other important skills.<sup>31</sup>



#### THE SAFE SLEEP CAMPAIGN (ACS)

This initiative provides families with safe sleep education and, if needed, playpens. Additionally, more than 35,000 families have received safe sleep education and 4,600 cribs have been provided to families in the Newborn Home Visiting Program. More than 9,500 mothers have received Safe Sleep education in the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, an example of effective cross-agency collaboration.

**Maternal depression.** The impact of maternal depression on infant development is well documented. There is a growing body of evidence showing that children raised by a mother suffering from depression experience an array of negative outcomes, including reduced self-regulation and slower cognitive development.<sup>32</sup>



#### In New York City, over 1 in 10 women who recently gave birth experienced symptoms of post-partum depression

SOURCE: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Bureau of Maternal, Infant & Reproductive Health PRAMS, 2012. Unpublished Raw Data.

**Teen/young parents.** Children born to teenage parents are at increased risk of poorer cognitive development if both the parents and children are not provided with adequate social support and services. Given their own developmental needs, adolescent parents are often less prepared to help their babies self-regulate and develop socially. Intellectual differences between children born to teenage parents and children born to older parents start to appear in elementary school and can continue (and even grow) in later school years.<sup>33</sup>



#### NEWBORN HOME VISITING PROGRAM (DOHMH)

The Newborn Home Visiting Program is expanding services to 1,600 more mothers of newborns in all family shelters across the city. The program supports families of newborns in the first few weeks after birth, during which a public health professional makes an in-person visit and provides educational information on a range of topics, including child development, secure attachment and bonding, safe sleep practices, and breastfeeding. The professional also connects families to community resources and can screen mothers for depression.



#### ThriveNYC

In 2015, ThriveNYC partnered NYC Health + Hospitals with Maimonides Medical Center and the Greater New York Hospital Association to work with hospital systems across the five boroughs to provide universal screening and care for women experiencing maternal depression. Working collaboratively, they are implementing a variety of new practices and system improvements that result in better outcomes for mothers and their infants.



## SPOTLIGHT:

### TALK TO YOUR BABY

#### Talk to Your Baby: NYC Children's Cabinet

In April 2015, the City launched Talk to Your Baby, an early literacy campaign that encourages early childhood language development and the establishment of strong bonds between parents, caregivers, and their children. The Children's Cabinet, with support from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, is leading efforts to promote the campaign.

The Talk to Your Baby "talk, read, sing" campaign helps parents and caregivers build babies' brains by providing simple tools, resources, and information at no cost to families. By supplying parents and caregivers with free books and other crucial tools, the City empowers them to give babies' brains the best start possible. Through a targeted parent engagement model, the City can also drive parents and caregivers to talk, read, and sing to babies on a regular basis. To date, the campaign has featured:

- The creation of the **Love Is (El Amor Es in Spanish)** baby book in partnership with Scholastic, Inc., which will eventually be distributed in-kind to 200,000 NYC families, along with Sesame Street's "Talking is Teaching" family resource reading guide that has been distributed with support from the Clinton Family Foundation;
- The translation of the **Love Is** book into eight other languages (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Urdu), to ensure that NYC's diverse immigrant population accesses the campaign's "talk, read, sing" message;
- The Talk to Your Baby texting platform (available in English and Spanish), which provides parents and caregivers regular tips and resources on how to effectively engage with babies;
- The creation of pocket-sized "talk, read, sing" tip cards (translated into Spanish, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, and Russian), that provide easy and quick advice that parents and caregivers can follow to engage with their babies;
- A targeted grassroots outreach effort to distribute the **Love Is** (and translated versions) book, tip cards, and other tools that promote the campaign's "talk, read, sing" message to NYC parents and caregivers living in high-need communities and/or immigrant communities; and
- A series of "NYC Baby Showers" in each of the five NYC boroughs to connect parents and caregivers to City agencies and community-based organizations that provide tools and resources on how to promote best outcomes for babies, parents, and caregivers.

Talk



## Conclusion

Infancy is a short but critical period that sets children up for positive growth and development or, when there are deficiencies, can start them off in life at a considerable disadvantage. The City is already dedicating significant resources to enhancing support for children at this stage, with a clear understanding of the vital role of families. The City recognizes that the best time to promote positive outcomes for infants is before they are even born—during a mother's pregnancy.

Sing





## The Transition to Organized Social Settings

The time between infancy (one year of age) and kindergarten (roughly five years of age) is an exciting time for children and their parents. Children are exploring their environment in new and increasingly sophisticated ways, although their sense of the world continues to be grounded in what they “see” rather than the more advanced reasoning expected of children in elementary school. Adult caregivers play a vital role in the lives of children during this time. Their attitudes and behaviors help children develop pre-literacy skills (through conversation and regularly seeing written words) and social-emotional or relational skills (through inclusion in activities and observing how others interact), and provide opportunities for children to safely experience their increasingly complex world.

Many children will also transition to their first organized social setting during this phase. This could take a number of forms, such as daycare, nursery school, informal parent-led play groups, or formal pre-school. In the section that follows we highlight the

skills and experiences that, if acquired by the time this phase of life starts (age one), help ease the transition and allow children to derive maximum benefit from the new experiences ahead.

**PRE-SCHOOL**





## SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

Young children are developing new skills and exploring their environments in ways that will help them adjust to more organized social settings and continue to grow cognitively and socially throughout the years. Although young children vary in the rates and ways in which they develop, certain skills and experiences will prepare them to move successfully into organized social settings.<sup>34</sup>

### Physical Skills

**Motor skills.** As children move from infancy toward pre-school, their motor skills progress to the point where they can walk on their own and move their bodies in more complex ways (like kicking a ball or standing on tiptoe). They also get better at manipulating things with their hands, like spoons or crayons.

### Cognitive Skills

**Language acquisition.** In this stage, children start using words to communicate, with increasing levels of complexity over time. They learn the names of familiar people and objects, expand their vocabularies, and master some basic grammar rules. Children also develop a more sophisticated understanding of spoken language in this phase, and develop the ability to follow simple instructions.

### Social-Emotional Skills

**Secure attachment.** During this period, primary caregivers remain children's primary source of comfort, and children may experience separation anxiety and/or a fear of strangers. Nonetheless, children in this phase begin to gain more independence and willingness to engage with less familiar individuals.

**Self-regulation.** At this age, children start to develop an awareness of "self" as separate from the surrounding world, which provides the foundation for more advanced self-regulation skills. During this phase, they start to be able to follow simple directions from adult caregivers, though they may still have temper tantrums and occasionally be defiant. Support from caring adults can help children develop self-regulation skills.<sup>35</sup>

### Experiences

**Nurturing, predictable interactions with primary caregivers.** Children require consistent and caring attention from primary caregivers. The relationships children have with parents and caregivers help to build and strengthen their brain architecture, form the foundation for secure attachments, and create a supportive environment. These relationships also facilitate comfortable and productive transitions to social settings outside of the home.<sup>36</sup>

**Exposure to informal social settings.** At this stage, children increasingly spend more time socializing and playing with other children outside of their home.



### EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (DOHMH)

This program supports families with children ages birth to three who have disabilities or developmental delays. After children are evaluated and found eligible for the program, a team of professionals works with the family to create a service plan that meets their needs. The program is free for all New Yorkers, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or immigration status.



## RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Here, we outline family- and community-level factors that, along with individual-level factors, influence how young children grow and develop. We note some of the City's efforts to address those factors in order to help young children transition to organized social settings.

### Individual Factors\*

**Financial literacy.** Given the complex demands of today's economy, financial literacy—or the ability to make effective and informed decisions with one's financial resources—is an increasingly important factor influencing young people's transitions to adult life. Children can begin to learn the importance of saving and the value of money at an early age, which increases financial security later in life.<sup>37</sup>

### Family Factors\*\*

**Caregiver literacy.** Ample research has demonstrated that reading aloud to young children promotes their language development and emergent literacy skills. Likewise, parents and caregivers can promote their young child's literacy interest by engaging them in shared reading and modeling positive attitudes toward reading. Given the importance of these early literacy skills and attitudes for a child's ongoing cognitive and educational growth, caregivers who have the literacy skills needed to engage children in these ways are in a much stronger position to promote healthy development.<sup>38</sup>

**Social support and social connectedness.** Parents of young children are best able to provide their children with enriching opportunities when they are embedded in a network of social connectedness and



### NEW YORK CITY EARLY LITERACY LEARNING PROJECT (DOE)

This early learning project encourages reading, listening, and communication skills to prepare young children for school. Children between one year and three years, nine months old, and their parents or caregivers are eligible to apply. Families can also receive assistance with child care, pre-K enrollment, employment and training services, and counseling.

## FACT:

With approximately 70,000 students, the NYC pre-K expansion is larger than the entire school systems of Boston (56,650) and San Francisco (55,320).

**SOURCES:** Boston Public School District. (2015). Boston Public Schools at a Glance 2015-2016. Available at: <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/site/handlers/filedownloadashx?moduleinstanceid=802&dataid=869&FileName=BPS%20at%20a%20Glance%2015-1109.pdf> San Francisco Public School District. (2015). San Francisco Public Schools: Facts at a Glance. Available at: <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/about-SFUSD/files/sfusd-facts-at-a-glance.pdf>

support. For young children who have not yet entered kindergarten/elementary school, access to formal and informal opportunities for play and socialization—from play dates to daycare to early childhood education—is made possible by parents and caregivers' connections to other adults and institutions in the community. Moreover, having social support can mitigate the stress of caring for young children and provide parents with the resources they need to navigate this period of development.<sup>39</sup>

### Community Factors\*\*\*

**Access to quality early education and care.** As young children begin to socialize more, the quality of their earliest organized social settings often influence their short- and long-term developmental outcomes. Research has shown that high-quality early child care and education experiences can lead to improved academic and social-emotional outcomes, especially for children from disadvantaged families.<sup>40</sup>



\*The Universal Individual Factors that affect the development of children entering pre-school are: physical health and emotional & behavioral health. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*Universal Family Factors that affect the development of children entering pre-school are: poverty, housing, food & nutrition, child maltreatment, safety in the home, substance misuse, mental health, parental incarceration, family structure, parental involvement in education, and immigration status. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*\*The Universal Community Factors that affect the development of children entering pre-school are: community violence & crime, health care services, mental/behavioral health services, safe recreational/community spaces, and community regard for human rights. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.



### EarlyLearnNYC (ACS)

EarlyLearn programs offer quality child care and Head Start programming in safe, clean, and high-quality settings that provide social and intellectual development, preparing children for pre-K, kindergarten, and ultimately a successful future. Programs are either home- or center-based, and pre-K is offered to all four-year-olds, in partnership with the NYC Department of Education. Services are available for up to ten hours a day.



### IncludeNYC (DYCD)

IncludeNYC helps parents of children with special needs by offering workshops, videos, a help line, and other supports. The program supports all disabled families and young people, in all five boroughs, with parenting assistance, Medicaid waiver services, social skills, and adult services. No one is ever turned away.



## SPOTLIGHT:



### Pre-K for All

**Pre-K for All** is New York City's historic initiative to provide every four-year-old in New York City with access to free, full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten.

Pre-K for All is offered in multiple settings citywide, providing families with diverse options to find a pre-K program that is a good fit for their child.

Programs operate in district elementary schools, DOE-operated pre-K Centers, and New York City Early Education Centers, which include some charter schools. pre-K programs in all settings are held to the same high-quality expectations outlined in the pre-K for All Program Quality Standards to ensure every pre-K child receives a high-quality early education. This means that all programs must provide 6 hours and 20 minutes of instruction that supports children's learning in the state pre-K learning standards known as the "pre-kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core."

# PRE-K FOR ALL

A child's year in pre-K is a unique opportunity for learning—85 percent of brain growth in children occurs by the age of five. pre-K is truly an irreplaceable time for children's growth and development. Studies clearly demonstrate that high-quality pre-K provides children with stronger math, reading, language, and social-emotional skills going into elementary school.

The New York City Department of Education's free, full-day, high-quality pre-K for All programs lay a foundation of skills and knowledge that will prepare children for success in school and life.



## Conclusion

Young children preparing to enter organized social settings like child care centers and pre-schools are at an exciting and pivotal stage of life: this is when they start to learn vital life skills from adults other than their primary caregivers. The City has placed a great emphasis on providing quality early care education experiences to all children, to ensure that they get the preparation they will need for the rest of their development. In addition, the City recognizes the importance of secure attachment between parents and caregivers and children at this stage, and, as a result, is investing in programs that promote parents' and caregivers' ability to nurture and connect with children, and provide the support they need as they continue to develop.





## The Transition to Elementary School

Kindergarten is a vital time for children to develop the skills and abilities necessary to operate independently of parents or primary caregivers. It is also the period when children begin to build a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem, as well as develop a firmer sense of their place in the world. This stage, which straddles a time of dependence yet increasing independence, can involve complexities in a child's emotional development. Children at this phase will start to exercise greater self-control and have a firmer idea about the rules of behavior, such as an understanding of "right" and "wrong," even if they at times test limits as they encounter new expectations. They may also begin to articulate their feelings, offer opinions, develop an interest in interpersonal relationships, and form close bonds with peers.<sup>41</sup>

There are certain skills and experiences that children should acquire at this level to make the most of the new experiences ahead of them. They are highlighted below.

# KINDERGARTEN





## SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

At this stage, children continue to be active learners and develop at different rates. While children will have acquired a variety of cognitive, emotional, and physical skills by the time they enter kindergarten and may develop more quickly in certain areas than others, there are particular skills and experiences that will help them face new opportunities and challenges in kindergarten.<sup>42</sup>

### Physical Skills

**Motor skills.** By the time they enter kindergarten, children have increased levels of agility and coordination, including the ability to do more complex and controlled movements such as hopping or skipping. In this phase, children begin to develop a degree of dexterity and fine motor skills.

### Cognitive Skills

**Language development.** Children begin to develop a strong ability to speak and understand spoken language. They may tell stories or jokes, recite songs or poems from memory, express opinions, and follow instructions. Young children develop a wide range of language skills and vocabulary through frequent interactions with peers and adults, as well as opportunities to express themselves in English and, where applicable, other home languages.

**Early math skills.** Children develop the ability to count, add, subtract, compare quantities, explore shapes, and understand basic patterns and sequencing. Children also learn that numerals stand for number names ("5" stands for "five").<sup>43</sup>

**Early literacy.** Children develop foundational literacy skills, including an understanding of basic concepts about books, alphabet knowledge, letter recognition, and an understanding of letter-sound relationships.<sup>44</sup>



### COMPREHENSIVE AFTERSCHOOL SYSTEM OF NEW YORK CITY (DYCD)

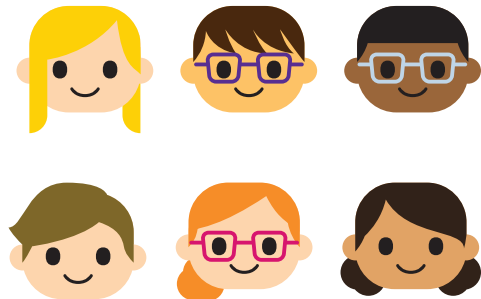
With over 900 programs serving young people, starting at kindergarten, these programs aim to help children build skills to support their academic achievement, raise their confidence, and cultivate their leadership skills through service learning and other civic engagement opportunities.



### SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) SUMMER IN THE CITY (DOE)

These programs provide students starting in grade 2 with opportunities to participate in innovative, engaging, and fun summer learning focused on STEM principles. Selection is made by lottery for two STEM programs in each borough. This program also includes additional enrichment opportunities for students in the arts and physical education, as well as trips to cultural institutions.





**8,812 NYC Community Schools students were provided vision screenings and 8,812 students received free glasses**

SOURCE: NYC Department of Education



#### SUMMER DAY CAMP PROGRAM (PARKS)

This program offers exciting opportunities for children beginning at age six with opportunities to engage in sports, fitness, and outdoor adventure, and take part in many of New York City's rich cultural and educational opportunities. Activities include arts and crafts, computer classes, field games, outdoor activities, and cultural field trips. Programs begin in July.

#### Social-Emotional Skills

**Secure attachment.** Although they still seek comfort from primary caregivers, children transitioning into kindergarten are increasingly able to separate from their caregiver without huge distress. They also start to demonstrate more independence and an increased willingness or desire to spend time with peers and individuals other than their primary caregiver.

**Self-regulation.** Children at this stage begin to develop the capacity for self-regulation. Exposure to new, organized social settings provides frequent opportunities to practice and further develop this skill. Children may still encounter frustrations and struggle to sustain attention for long periods of time. As the complexity of the settings they encounter increases, children will need support from adults to sustain their efforts toward self-regulation.<sup>45</sup>

**Social skills.** In this phase, children increasingly develop close-knit relationships with one or more peer members or friends. Children at this stage begin to understand the concept of "yours" and "mine," develop the ability to share, and show concern and sympathy for others.

#### Experiences

**Nurturing, predictable interactions with primary caregivers.** These relationships build and strengthen young children's brain architecture, form the foundation for secure attachments, and create a supportive environment for the development of other skills and abilities. They also facilitate comfortable and productive transitions to social settings outside of the home.<sup>46</sup>

**Early exposure to organized social settings.** Research shows that participating in organized pre-school can improve children's cognitive, language, and social-emotional development and help them prepare for the transition to kindergarten and beyond.<sup>47</sup>

## SPOTLIGHT:

### NYC Community Schools

#### Community Schools

The NYC Community Schools Initiative is a central element of Mayor Bill de Blasio's vision to re-imagine the City's school system. Community Schools are neighborhood hubs where students receive high-quality academic instruction, families can access social services, and communities congregate to share resources and address their common challenges.

Driven by the mayor's sustained commitment to Community Schools, NYC is now at the forefront of a national movement focused on a holistic and comprehensive approach to education in urban centers. This approach prioritizes student wellness, readiness to learn, personalized instruction, community partnerships, and family engagement as key strategies to leverage better academic outcomes among high-need students.

Community Schools recognize that students who are hungry, can't see the blackboard, or are missing school regularly face critical obstacles to learning in the classroom. By providing an extra meal, connecting a parent to job training, or enrolling a student in an afterschool program, schools can lower barriers to learning and help kids succeed.

To ensure that every student in need can be served by the Community Schools program, the City is significantly expanding vision screening. For the first time, the City provided free eye tests at all 130 Community Schools, and partnered with Warby Parker to provide a free pair of glasses to every student in need. Based on these student needs, the City estimates that over the next four years, 60,000 students will receive vision screening and approximately 20,000 students will receive free glasses.

## RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are a variety of individual and community-level factors, both positive and negative, that play an important role in well-being outcomes in young children. We discuss some of these below, and alongside each factor note some of the City's efforts to address it to help children transition to elementary school.



### Individual Factors\*

**Unaddressed mental health conditions.** Children entering elementary school with unaddressed mental health problems are at a heightened risk of forming negative attitudes about their skills, of experiencing behavior challenges, and of failing to obtain the skills they need to continue to advance.<sup>48</sup>

**Developmental delays or disabilities.** Some students may have significant delays when compared to accepted developmental milestones in one or more functional areas, including cognitive, language and communication, adaptive, social and emotional, and motor development. Without appropriate supports and interventions, students with developmental delays or disabilities may not

be provided the opportunity for equal access to high-quality, rigorous instruction that is matched to their individual needs.<sup>49</sup>

**Language attainment.** Research has demonstrated that children with low levels of language attainment at an early age are more likely to continue to be behind later in elementary school in vocabulary, language development, and reading comprehension measures.

**Financial literacy.** Children at this age can benefit from early financial literacy programs that prioritize the importance of saving. Such programs not only help with mathematics skills, but also prepare children to make wise financial decisions that will not hinder their economic growth in the future.<sup>50</sup>



### SUMMER READING CHALLENGES (LIBRARIES)

Summer Reading Challenges offer opportunities for children to engage with books throughout the summer. Families can take home reading lists supplied by libraries, which also offer separate book reading sessions for all age groups, including kindergarteners. Book lists change every summer, and libraries often offer workshops and other activities to further engage with books.



### DISTRICT 75 PROGRAMS (DOE)

District 75 programs provide citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support for students who are on the autism spectrum, have significant cognitive delays, are severely emotionally challenged, or are sensory impaired and/or multiply disabled. District 75 consists of 56 school organizations, home and hospital instruction, and vision and hearing services.

\*The Universal Individual Factors that affect the development of children in elementary school are: physical health and emotional & behavioral health. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*The Universal Family Factors that affect the development of children in elementary school are: poverty, housing, food & nutrition, child maltreatment, safety in the home, substance misuse, mental health, parental incarceration, family structure, parental involvement in education, and immigration status. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*\*The Universal Community Factors that affect the development of children in elementary school are: community violence & crime, health care services, mental/behavioral health services, safe recreational/community spaces, internet access, and community regard for human rights. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.



### Famiy Factors\*\*

### Community Factors\*\*\*

**Quality elementary schools.** Access to high-quality kindergarten and elementary schools has been found to promote cognitive development, social skills, and academic gains that persist into adulthood, especially for girls and children of lower socioeconomic status. Additionally, students that attend high-quality primary schools have greater opportunities as a result of, on average, higher test scores and access to better instruction.<sup>51</sup>

High-quality instruction is positively related to higher learning outcomes for students. Innovative and comprehensive classroom instruction, led by capable and committed teachers, helps students to fulfill their potential in school and beyond.<sup>52</sup>

Positive school climates—which are characterized by safety, engagement, and a positive and structured environment—have substantial influence on young students' growth and learning, including their social and ethical development.<sup>53</sup>

**1 in 6 children in the U.S. have a developmental disability**



**SOURCES:** Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Key Findings: Trends in the Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities in U.S. Children, 1997–2008. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/birthdefects-dd-keyfindings.html>

## Conclusion

One of the City's most profound responsibilities is the education of its young people. The City has been meeting this responsibility with major innovative initiatives, such as Pre-K for All, which instill in the city's children the skills they will need for kindergarten and prepare them for success during their later school years and beyond.





## The Transition to Middle School

Early adolescence is one of the most dynamic stages of a child's development. From a physical perspective, it is when many young people enter puberty, a highly visible period of growth. Intellectually, early adolescents are intensely curious, and they show considerable interest in adult interactions and behavior as they continue to make sense of the social world they inhabit. It is also a time when young people begin to develop their own moral values, rather than simply following those of adults around them—and, in many cases, these values will remain with them for life. Psychologically, early adolescents form their own identities and seek greater independence while also at times engaging in behavior that can be characterized as unpredictable and erratic. Peer groups become more important than ever.<sup>54</sup>

The transition to middle school is eased when children have acquired the skills and experiences outlined below. Middle school is considered a more academically rigorous and socially intense environment than the grades that preceded it, and when children first arrive they are challenged with being

the youngest students in the school. Having the skills and experiences described below will help this group navigate challenges, and may help to mitigate the "achievement drop" that often occurs immediately following the transition from elementary to middle school.<sup>55</sup>

**PRE-TEEN**

**YEARS**





## SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

To be ready for middle school, children must have acquired certain cognitive and social-emotional skills and a range of experiences, detailed below.

### Cognitive Skills

Children entering middle school should have a sense of awareness about the learning process. They should understand that applying themselves (studying, practicing, etc.) leads to improvements in performance.<sup>56</sup>

**Literacy.** Children entering middle school begin to engage written materials in more sophisticated ways than before. For example, some of the literacy-related skills children entering middle school will need to have at their disposal include structuring a cohesive argument supported by text; unpacking complex words; connecting ideas; and tracking themes.<sup>57</sup>

**Numeracy.** The math skills middle school students need build on the computational skills developed over the course of elementary school. However, middle school students are expected to apply those skills in more advanced ways by making sense of problems and, using abstract reasoning to identify computational approaches to problem solving, persevere and solve them. Additionally, this group learns to deconstruct others' reasoning and suggest improvements and, relatedly, know when to use various math tools.<sup>58</sup>

### Social-Emotional Skills

Children approaching the transition to middle school have an expanded sense of the world and their place in it. They also form more complex opinions of themselves and their capacities. Their sense of self, how they relate to others, and the value they place on social interaction are increasingly shaped by peers and adults outside of their immediate family.<sup>59</sup>

**Self-regulation.** During middle childhood, children become less egocentric and more attuned to the needs and desires of others. They begin to see the benefits of following social norms beyond the approval of caring adults.<sup>60</sup>



**Social interaction.** Peer relationships become critical during middle childhood. As children approach the middle school years, having friendships—particularly with same-sex peers—becomes very important to their ongoing development. Peer pressure can be a powerful force during this time; healthy friendships can go a long way in helping children make sound, good choices.<sup>61</sup>

**Sexuality.** Girls tend to physically mature faster than boys, and both genders experience shyness, blushing, and modesty. Additionally, both boys and girls begin to show off, express a greater interest in privacy, and worry about being normal.<sup>62</sup>

### Experiences

**Extracurricular activities.** Children who participate in extracurricular activities have an opportunity to develop better social skills, not only with peers but with adults. There is also evidence that children who participate in extracurricular activities in middle childhood continue to do so during high school.<sup>63</sup>



### SCHOOL'S OUT NEW YORK CITY (DYCD)

This program provides a pathway to success for youth in grades 6, 7, and 8. Activity areas include academic enrichment and support, leadership development (including service learning and civic engagement), sports and other physical activity, and healthy lifestyles. Often structured like clubs, the model offers young people a choice in how they spend their time. It also requires youth leadership through service and helps young people develop the skills they need to stay on track throughout middle school. The de Blasio Administration recently doubled the number of slots available to 115,000.



### SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS (DYCD)

Summer Enrichment Programs are offered in July and August and are designed, in particular, to support children of working families. Young people can participate in programming ranging from dance, music, and sports to STEM and public service.



## RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The following are key individual, family, and community-level factors that influence the development of children in the pre-teen years. Alongside each factor, we note some of the City's efforts to address that factor to help pre-teens make a successful transition from elementary school to middle school.

### Individual Factors\*

**Unaddressed mental health conditions.** As children move through middle childhood toward adolescence, their mental health may undergo changes. Early adolescence is the period in which many mental disorders first arise, and more than half of all mental disorders begin by age 14. Mental disorders can result in serious problems at home, with peers, and in school, and can complicate the transition to middle school.<sup>64</sup> If left untreated, these conditions may worsen over the course of life.

**Juvenile justice involvement.** Coming into contact with the juvenile justice system can place young people at a serious disadvantage in gaining the experience and skills they need for success later in life. Research shows that being arrested negatively impacts young people's educational outcomes and increases the likelihood of subsequent offending and arrest; being detained can have a profoundly negative impact on young people's well-being across many domains.<sup>65</sup>



**Learning or cognitive disorders.** During middle school, academic work focuses more on organizing and applying knowledge and skill, rather than building routine skills.

Organization and time management become more important as the structure of the school day, teachers, and expectations all change, which allow for more independence and responsibility. Children with unrecognized learning disabilities may struggle with these increased demands. They may also have anxiety or behavioral challenges in the classroom linked to their frustration and sense of failure. Without early identification and intervention, academic and associated problems will grow each year. Addressing



### FAMILY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (ACS)

This program supports families that are struggling with everyday challenges. It works to reduce conflict, strengthen families, and connect them to many services that provide ongoing support in the city's communities. Additionally, the Family Assessment Program helps families handle such concerns as runaway children, children skipping school, disruptive behavior, and avoiding the court system.

learning problems and providing the appropriate services and accommodations can have a positive impact not only on academic performance but also on a child's general functioning, mood, and behavior.<sup>66</sup>

**Substance misuse.** The use and abuse of drugs and alcohol can affect young people's present and future health, learning, and skill development. Early substance use has been linked with alterations in



brain structure, function, and neuro-cognition, as well as an increased risk of developing substance use disorders later in life.<sup>67</sup>

**English proficiency.** Children are able to get the most from their school experiences when they are proficient in the language of instruction. In the U.S., children who are proficient in English and academically successful by the end of third grade have the strongest likelihood for success throughout the rest of their academic careers. Children who are not English proficient at the end of elementary school face increased challenges transitioning to middle school, where educational demands grow in complexity.<sup>68</sup>

**Dropping out.** Failure to complete middle school is associated with a number of negative indicators. In particular, middle school dropouts have lower earnings and are more likely to have health problems later in life. Dropouts are also more likely to be unemployed and engage in criminal activity. Additionally, middle school dropouts who ultimately resume high school are over age and become twice as likely to permanently drop out of high school.<sup>69</sup>

**Financial literacy.** Failure to complete middle school is associated with a number of negative indicators. In particular, middle school



### BEACON PROGRAMS (DYCD)

Beacon programs are school-based community centers serving children aged six and older, and adults. There are currently 80 Beacons located throughout the five boroughs, operating in afternoons and evenings, on weekends, and during school holidays and vacation periods, including summer.



### ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION SERVICES (DOE)

The City provides educational services to students who speak a language other than English at home and are not yet proficient in English. If a school does not have a bilingual program, parents may select another school in the same school district that does have a program. Programs include Transitional Bilingual Education, English as a Second Language, and Dual Language.



dropouts have lower earnings and are more likely to have health problems later in life. Dropouts are also more likely to be unemployed and engage in criminal activity. Additionally, middle school dropouts who ultimately resume high school are over age, and become twice as likely to permanently drop out of high school.<sup>70</sup>

### Family Factors\*\*

**Parental involvement in digital/online behavior.** Parents and caregivers are on the front lines helping their children navigate the online world and social media, and teaching their children how to be good online citizens. Though children may learn online behaviors from non-familial sources as well, parents and caregivers are responsible for ensuring that their children know how to conduct themselves online, for online behaviors can have an impact on a child’s social well-being, educational progress, and future employment prospects.<sup>71</sup>



### Community Factors\*\*\*

**Quality middle schools.** Quality schools share some important characteristics: adequate facilities, a positive school climate, and programming that meet the needs of the student body. Middle school students’ achievement in literacy and numeracy is bolstered when they learn in schools that are well-regarded physically, socially, and in their curricular and extra-curricular offerings.<sup>72</sup>

\*The Universal Individual Factors that affect the development of youth in middle school are: physical health and emotional & behavioral health. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*The Universal Family Factors that affect the development of youth in middle school are: poverty, housing, food & nutrition, child maltreatment, safety in the home, substance misuse, mental health, parental incarceration, family structure, parental involvement in education, and immigration status. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*\*The Universal Community Factors that affect the development of youth in middle school are: community violence & crime, health care services, mental/behavioral health services, safe recreational/community spaces, internet access, and community regard for human rights. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

## SPOTLIGHT:



### Equity and Excellence

**Equity and Excellence** is an ambitious set of goals for New York City schools: By 2026, 80 percent of our students will graduate high school on time, and two-thirds of our students will be college ready.

The **eight initiatives** that comprise the Equity and Excellence agenda will ensure all students receive a world-class education and have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The Equity and Excellence initiatives—as well as the progress already made on each initiative and steps being taken in coming months—include:

- 1. UNIVERSAL SECOND GRADE LITERACY:** To boost literacy, every elementary school will receive support from a dedicated reading coach, who will ensure all students are reading on grade level by the end of second grade. Within six years, at least two-thirds of students will be able to read with fluency by the end of second grade, with the target of 100 percent literacy by 2026.
- 2. ALGEBRA FOR ALL:** Every student will complete algebra no later than ninth grade, enabling them to reach more advanced math courses in high school, which will better prepare them for college and careers. By 2022, all students will have access to algebra in eighth grade, and there will be academic supports in place in elementary and middle school to build greater algebra readiness.
- 3. AP FOR ALL:** Every high school student will have access to a range of Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The first new AP courses will be added in Fall 2016, along with prep courses at schools where students need to build AP readiness. By Fall 2021, students at all high schools will have access to at least five AP classes.
- 4. COMPUTER SCIENCE FOR ALL:** Every student will receive computer science education in elementary, middle, and high school by 2025. The City has released applications to add over 50 new middle and high school programs, an expansion of the Software Engineering Program, and the AP Computer Science Principles course.
- 5. COLLEGE ACCESS FOR ALL — MIDDLE SCHOOL:** Every middle school student will have the opportunity to visit a college campus, enabling earlier exposure to college for all our students.
- 6. COLLEGE ACCESS FOR ALL — HIGH SCHOOL:** Every student will have the resources and individually tailored supports at their high school to pursue a path to college. By 2018, every student will graduate from high school with an individual college and career plan.
- 7. SINGLE SHEPHERD:** Every student in grades 6-12 in Districts 7 and 23 will be paired with a dedicated guidance counselor or social worker who will support them through graduation and college enrollment.
- 8. DISTRICT-CHARTER LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS:** District and charter schools will be paired through a new program to foster stronger relationships and sharing of best practices. These partnerships will include facilitated conversations among schools, organized visits, and sharing of resources and best practices.





Additionally, a positive school climate, characterized by safety, a favorable atmosphere for teaching and learning, strong relationships, and a welcoming and supportive environment, are linked to better health and academic outcomes for students. They are also connected to risk prevention and higher levels of teacher retention, which facilitate the development of supportive peer and adult relationships.<sup>73</sup>

Research demonstrates that quality instruction is critical to successful learning—whether it occurs in school, after school, or during the summer.<sup>74</sup>

It is important for students to take rigorous courses to increase their knowledge and prepare for more challenging work in high school and beyond. Algebra is widely recognized as the “gatekeeper” to higher-level math and science courses. Today, only about half of New York City middle schools offer algebra coursework in eighth grade, but the City is working hard to ensure that all middle school students can take algebra in the coming years. Similar commitments have been made to ensure every child has access to the arts, physical education, and STEM classes, including computer science. These classes promote critical skills, such as thinking creatively and working as a team, as well as technical skills that will power the 21st century economy.

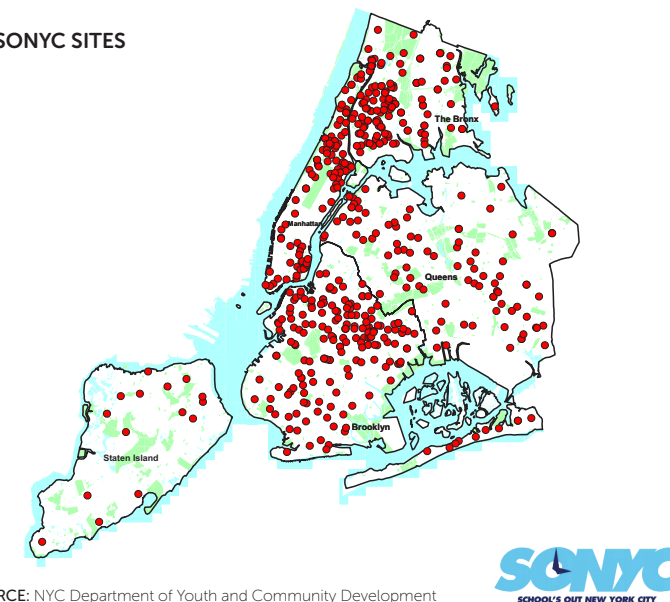
**Access to literacy support.** Given how essential literacy is to success in adulthood, it is important to support children and youth who need help building or catching up on their literacy skills.



**Access to quality out-of-school activities.** Afterschool, evening, and weekend programs can provide children, youth, and young adults with access to physical activity, STEM education, arts and culture, and opportunities for civic participation. Out-of-school programs of this sort offer proven benefits for young people, including improved work-study habits and homework completion rates; stronger feelings of engagement and school connectedness; increases in self-esteem; improved relationships with peers and adults; and declines in negative, risk-taking behavior. Research demonstrates that these programs provide added value to both schools and communities. They help leverage school reform and student achievement strategies; reinforce connections between schools and communities; and serve as a conduit for critical supports (e.g., social services, medical and mental health) for children and families.<sup>75</sup>

## SONYC Afterschool Programs

● SONYC SITES



SOURCE: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development



### SCHOOL'S OUT NEW YORK CITY (DYCD)

SONYC after school programs provide a pathway to success for youth in grades 6, 7, and 8. Activity areas include academic enrichment and support, leadership development (including service learning and civic engagement), sports and other physical activity, and healthy lifestyles. Often structured like clubs, the model offers young people a choice in how they spend their time. It also requires youth leadership through service and helps young people develop the skills they need to stay on track throughout middle school. The de Blasio administration recently doubled the number of slots available to 115,000.

## Conclusion

The City is dedicated to promoting the education and well-being of children in middle school by offering a wide array of programs aimed at helping young people at this pivotal stage of development on everything from individual problems, such as involvement with the juvenile justice system, to community-wide issues, such as the need for access to rigorous education.





## The Transition to High School

Middle adolescence, the period of development that roughly corresponds to the transition to high school, is a time of significant change and increased autonomy. The physical changes that started with the beginning of puberty continue, and teens look more and more like their adult selves. As they become more capable of doing things for themselves and work toward achieving a sense of competence, they also begin to develop a firmer sense of who they are and who they want to be. At this stage, group identity and belonging, as well as peer relationships, take on increased significance. Sexuality and intimate relationships become important for many teens. While this process of identity formation can be exciting, it can also be fraught with anxiety and confusion, and some forms of experimentation that accompany self-exploration can entail risk. Although teenagers' brains are not yet fully developed, the choices they make at this stage of life can have a lasting impact.<sup>76</sup>

Transitioning successfully to high school, and making the choices that promote ongoing well-being, is easier when teens are equipped with certain key skills and experiences. We highlight these below.



# ADOLESCENCE



## SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

To be ready for high school, youth should have acquired certain skills and experiences.

### Cognitive Skills

Youth on the threshold of high school need to be able to think abstractly, to form their own ideas and questions about the world, and to consider multiple perspectives. Thinking about the future will start to become longer-term, with appropriate attention to which options are practical.<sup>77</sup>

**Literacy skills and reading proficiency.** Literacy in high school builds on the work done in earlier grades to develop the mechanics of reading and writing. Adolescents will engage different kinds of texts, construct written explanations of their ideas, and have a vocabulary that allows them to convey complex ideas to their teachers and peers.<sup>78</sup>

**Numeracy skills and math proficiency.** The focus on concrete, formal operations in elementary and middle school should give way to higher-order mathematical thinking in high school. Youth preparing for high school need to have basic computational mastery—since the content in high school—algebra, functions, geometry, modeling, statistics, and probability—builds off these fundamental concepts. Mastery of higher-level math skills prepares teens not only for success in high school, but outside, in early work experience and college.<sup>79</sup>

### Social-Emotional Skills

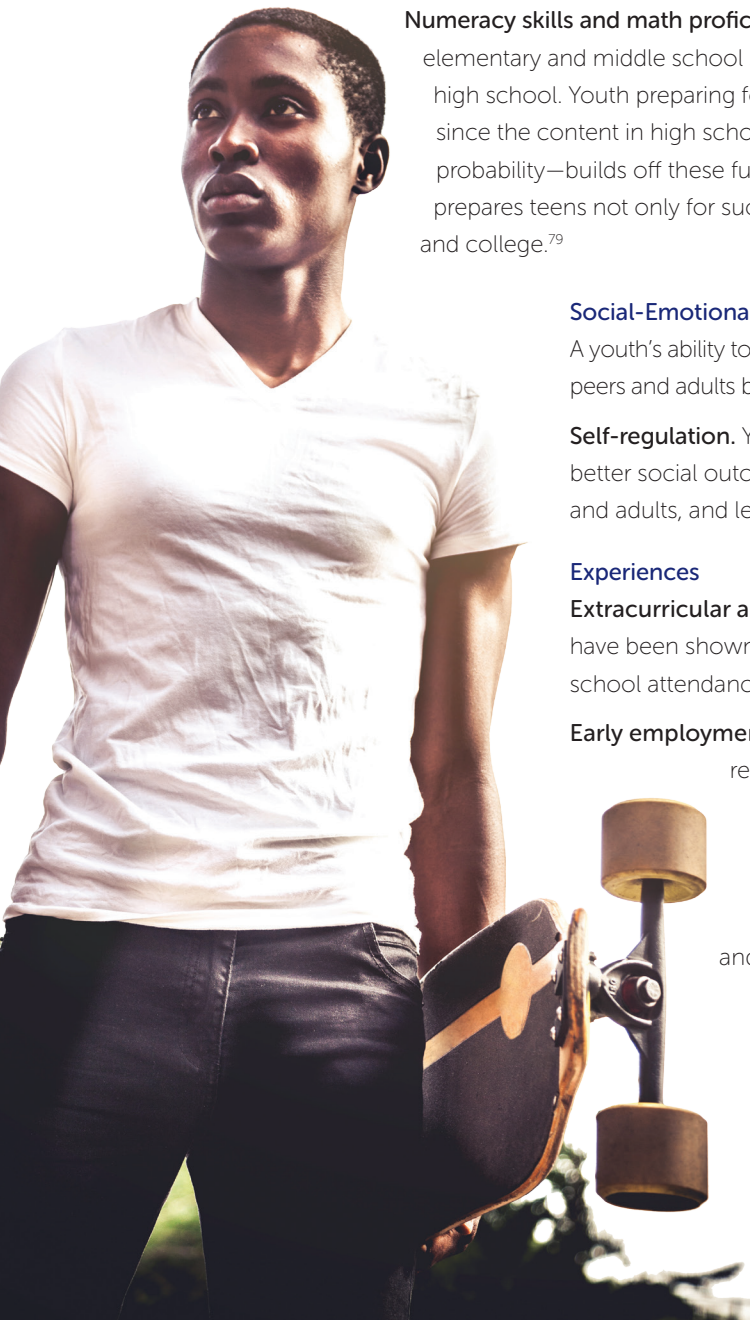
A youth's ability to navigate their social world is crucial—as their interactions with peers and adults become more complex and their own self-identities evolve.

**Self-regulation.** Youth able to regulate their emotions and behaviors have better social outcomes, including more positive relationships with peers and adults, and less social conflict.<sup>80</sup>

### Experiences

**Extracurricular activities.** Extracurricular activities, which benefit all students, have been shown to promote positive outcomes in high school, such as school attendance and improved academic performance.<sup>81</sup>

**Early employment experiences.** Early work experience is important in two respects: 1) it helps young people acculturate to the world of work, begin to hone career interests, and start to build professional networks; 2) it provides an important forum and context for personal development and refinement of essential skills, including teamwork, problem-solving, and communication.<sup>82</sup>



## SPOTLIGHT:



### ThriveNYC—A Mental Health Roadmap for All

The mental health roadmap launched by **First Lady Chirlane McCray** and DOHMH, in partnership with many other City agencies and entities, outlined a bold initiative to bolster mental health for the city's youngest citizens. The initiative includes supports for babies and mothers, and envelops NYC children, youth, and young adults in a socio-emotional safety net in both the school and community context. **ThriveNYC** includes:

- **MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS IN HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS:** The City will assess the mental health service needs at 52 new public schools starting in the 2017 school year. These “high-need schools” account for a disproportionate share of suspensions.
- **OFFER AT-RISK TRAINING TO ALL FULL-TIME STAFF OF ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOLS:** At-Risk Training is an online training that uses interactive role play to educate teachers on how to recognize early signs and symptoms of psychological distress, and connect students to resources within the school setting.
- **NETWORK OF MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANTS SERVING ALL NYC SCHOOLS:** The City will hire 100 school mental health consultants who will work with schools citywide to ensure that staff and administrators have an outlet to connect students with the highest care.
- **TRAIN SELECTED STAFF OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID:** A five-step action plan for assessing, identifying, and offering assistance for 12- to 18-year-old youth in crisis.
- **TRAIN SCHOOL STAFF IN YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION USING AN EVIDENCE-BASED SUICIDE PREVENTION MODEL:** Making Education Partners focuses on all school staff in suicide awareness and identification.
- **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR ALL YOUTH IN RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH SHELTERS:** The City will add funds dedicated to enhancing mental health services at Runaway and Homeless Youth Drop-In Centers, Crisis Shelters and Transitional Independent Living programs.
- **COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY PLUS:** The City will expand access to a suite of four evidence-based adaptations of cognitive behavioral therapy by training 200 mental health clinicians and more than 1,000 case planners to support delivery.
- **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROGRAMMING FOR ALL YOUTH AT RIKERS ISLAND (IN COORDINATION WITH DOC AND NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS):** The City will provide psychiatric assessment and afterschool therapeutic arts programming for all youth under 21, and substance misuse programming for 16- to 21-year-olds.



## RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are additional individual-, family, and community-level factors that exert a significant influence on the development of teens as they move from middle school to high school. We note some of those factors below, as well as some of the City's efforts to address those factors.

### Individual Factors\*

**Unaddressed mental health conditions.** Adolescence is a period in which mental illness is of increased concern, for many mental disorders first arise in adolescence—estimates suggest that about one fifth of adolescents have diagnosable mental disorders (the most common of which is depression), and the risk of suicide is especially high for adolescents. Additionally, adolescents with mental disorders are more likely to engage in risky and harmful behaviors such as substance misuse and unsafe sexual activity. In New York City, eight percent of high school students report having attempted suicide. Most adolescents with mental disorders don't seek out or receive treatment due to barriers to care and the fear of being stigmatized. It is important to identify adolescents in need of higher levels of support, as half of all people who develop mental illness have their first episode before the age of 14.<sup>84</sup>

**Juvenile and criminal justice involvement.** Juvenile and criminal justice involvement disrupts social networks and educational progress, and has a lasting impact on a youth's future opportunities. Research shows that being arrested negatively impacts youth educational outcomes and increases the likelihood of subsequent offending and arrest; being detained can have a profoundly negative impact on young people's well-being across many domains. Estimates suggest that between half and three quarters of all teens



### RESPITE CARE SERVICES FOR PERSONS IN NEED OF SUPERVISION (ACS)

ACS offers 21-day respite care services to persons in need of supervision and juvenile justice-involved youth who are at risk of detention or placement because of family instability or conflict. The respite program provides coaching, therapeutic, and support services to reduce conflicts and improve the family's functioning. Services may include parenting skills, mental health treatment, and substance abuse and/or domestic violence programs.



who have spent time in juvenile detention are incarcerated later in life, and juveniles who are transferred to adult facilities are more likely to re-offend.<sup>85</sup>

**Sexual safety.** Many youth start making decisions about engaging in sexual activity in their adolescent years. At this stage, young people can benefit from advice about preventing possible undesirable outcomes such as unintended pregnancies, sexually-transmitted infections, and sexual violence.<sup>86</sup>

**Pregnancy/parenthood.** Adolescent pregnancy has been linked to negative outcomes for both mothers (including lower educational attainment and earnings) and babies (including increased risks for pre-term delivery, low birth weight, and neonatal mortality). Adolescent parenthood has also been shown to have negative educational outcomes for fathers.<sup>87</sup> It is critical that young parents be provided with services and support so that they have an opportunity to continue their education and enter the workforce as well as link their babies to early educational programs and activities.

**Abusive/unhealthy relationships.** Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can severely affect teens' ability to develop cognitive, social-emotional, and relational skills. Victims of dating violence are much more likely to engage in risky or self-harming behaviors than non-victims. Furthermore, early dating violence can lead to future domestic violence and have a negative impact on the lives of any children in those households.<sup>88</sup>

**Substance misuse.** Substance misuse becomes more common as children move into adolescence. Teen alcohol use is associated with various risky behaviors and negative outcomes—such as unprotected sex, marijuana use, poor academic performance, and attempting suicide—and is related to an increased risk of alcohol dependence in adulthood. Cigarette smoking often starts in adolescence and is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. Adolescent substance misuse also has an epidemic character in that it is spread through peer influence. However, an increasing body of research suggests that adolescent substance misuse may be at least partly preventable.<sup>89</sup>

**Learning and cognitive disorders.** Unrecognized learning or cognitive disorders, and the associated social and emotional challenges, increase teens' school dropout risk and, potentially limit career opportunities.<sup>90</sup>



### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES (NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS, DOHMH)

NYC Health + Hospitals offers reproductive health care services for young women, including contraception services (also available at pediatric and adolescent primary care clinics) and access to long-acting reversible contraception through family planning and gynecology clinics.



### TEENS IN NYC MOBILE APP (DOHMH)

DOHMH's Teens in NYC phone app provides a list of teen-friendly NYC medical providers that address sexual reproductive health care at little-to-no cost. Services may include parenting skills, mental health treatment, and substance abuse and/or domestic violence programs.





**Dropping out.** Leaving high school before graduation is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including diminished employment opportunities and lifetime earnings. While high school equivalency recipients may have a similar skill set to high school graduates, their life outcomes are more similar to those of high school dropouts than graduates.<sup>91</sup>

**English proficiency.** Young people who do not speak English proficiently are at a disadvantage with respect to educational attainment, academic success across subjects, and awareness of the resources that the City has to offer.<sup>92</sup>

**Financial literacy.** Adolescents that continue to develop financial literacy skills built off previous instruction are better prepared for the responsibilities of post-high school life. Young people who learn money management skills and information about post-high school financial programs—such as student loans, credit cards, and student banking—are better prepared for life after school.<sup>93</sup>

### Family Factors\*\*

**Parental monitoring of digital/online behavior.** Although adolescence is a period of increased autonomy and freedom, parents of teens remain responsible for keeping track of their child's online behavior. As many adolescents may engage in increased risk-taking or experimentation online, parental oversight, attention, and involvement can help promote safe and secure online behavior and reduce the incidence of cyber bullying.<sup>94</sup>



### TRANSFER SCHOOLS (DOE)

**Transfer schools are small, academically rigorous, full-time high schools designed to re-engage students who have dropped out or fallen behind in credits. Students who enroll in these schools attend regular classes Monday through Friday; participate in workshops and get support with academic and personal goals; have access to tutoring, Regents prep, and extracurricular activities; and develop plans for college or post-high-school employment.**

### Community Factors\*\*\*

**Quality high schools.** Research indicates that the quality of the middle and high schools that young people attend have an impact on student outcomes, including attendance, test scores, graduation, and college readiness.<sup>95</sup>

Additionally, clear, coherent, and high-quality instruction is related to higher learning outcomes for students. Rigorous and ambitious classroom instruction can help students to fulfill their potential in school and beyond.<sup>96</sup>

Positive school climates also play a protective role in the academic and social-emotional development of adolescents. For example, research has shown that positive school climates can reduce aggressive actions and attitudes in school and moderate the effects of homophobic bullying.<sup>97</sup>

Students who are offered rigorous courses are significantly more likely to earn Regents Diplomas—awarded to students with exemplary academic performance—than those who are not. The availability of rigorous courses has also been shown to reduce disparities in educational attainment. Students who take rigorous courses such as AP math and science have also been found to be more likely than students who do not to earn degrees in physical science, engineering, and life science—fields that have experienced high rates of job growth and high salaries. This correlation is particularly strong among Black, Hispanic, and female students.<sup>98</sup>

**Access to alternative educational programs.** Students come to school with different educational backgrounds, needs, and learning styles—something that is particularly true in a city as diverse as New York. Alternative educational programs can help to provide children who are not ideally served by the standard educational system with the structures and support they need to succeed.



### CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (DOE)

**Career and Technical Educational options provide students with a range of schools and programs that are focused on preparing graduates for higher education and career-track employment in high-demand industries. Students gain work experience outside the classroom and apply their skills and knowledge, preparing them for the 21st century workforce. They also take rigorous classes to help them earn a CTE-endorsed Regents Diploma, and are connected with mentors inside and outside the classroom who provide much-needed guidance and direction throughout the program.**

\*The Universal Individual Factors that affect the development of youth entering high school are: physical health and emotional & behavioral health. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*Universal Family Factors that affect the development of youth entering high school are: poverty, housing, food & nutrition, child maltreatment, safety in the home, substance misuse, mental health, parental incarceration, family structure, parental involvement in education, and immigration status. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*\*The Universal Community Factors that affect the development of youth entering high school are: community violence & crime, health care services, mental/behavioral health services, safe recreational/community spaces, internet access, and community regard for human rights. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.



**Youth leadership and civic engagement opportunities.** Youth engagement and youth leadership opportunities foster resilience and positive development. Research shows that volunteerism and group membership can promote upward mobility and help young people succeed later in life.<sup>99</sup>

**Access to quality enrichment activities.** Research suggests that participating in quality out-of-school time programs and enrichment activities is tied to higher grades, more positive school-related attitudes, and higher academic aspirations for teenagers. Moreover, high-quality enrichment activities can support teenagers in specific challenge areas and provide key skill-building to promote high school graduation, college enrollment, and workforce readiness.<sup>100</sup>



#### NYC SERVICE

NYC Service promotes volunteerism, engages New Yorkers in service, builds volunteer capacity, and mobilizes the power of volunteers and service year members to impact the city's greatest needs. Its vision is to inspire and empower all New Yorkers to volunteer and serve the city and each other. This division of the Office of the Mayor launched in April 2009 in response to President Barack Obama's national call for volunteerism and a goal to engage 100 million Americans in service by 2020.



#### MAYOR'S YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE)

The Mayor's Youth Leadership Council is made up of a diverse group of 20 high school sophomores and juniors from across the five boroughs. The program trains these students in leadership development and policy research and allows them to provide critical youth input to the Mayor's Office and the Young Men's Initiative. Additionally, there are several youth leadership councils throughout the city that have been organized through NYC Service that focus on youth programs.



#### BE 911: TEENS TAKE HEART PROGRAM (FDNY)

The FDNY teamed up with the FDNY Foundation and NYC Service to offer a customized, compressions-only CPR training program aimed at educating New York City high school students. The program helps prepare participants to act as citizen responders, stepping in and helping to save a life in response to cardiac arrest. The program also promotes cardiovascular health and ways to live a heart-healthy lifestyle. The fast-paced program offers hands-on training in lively and interactive forums.

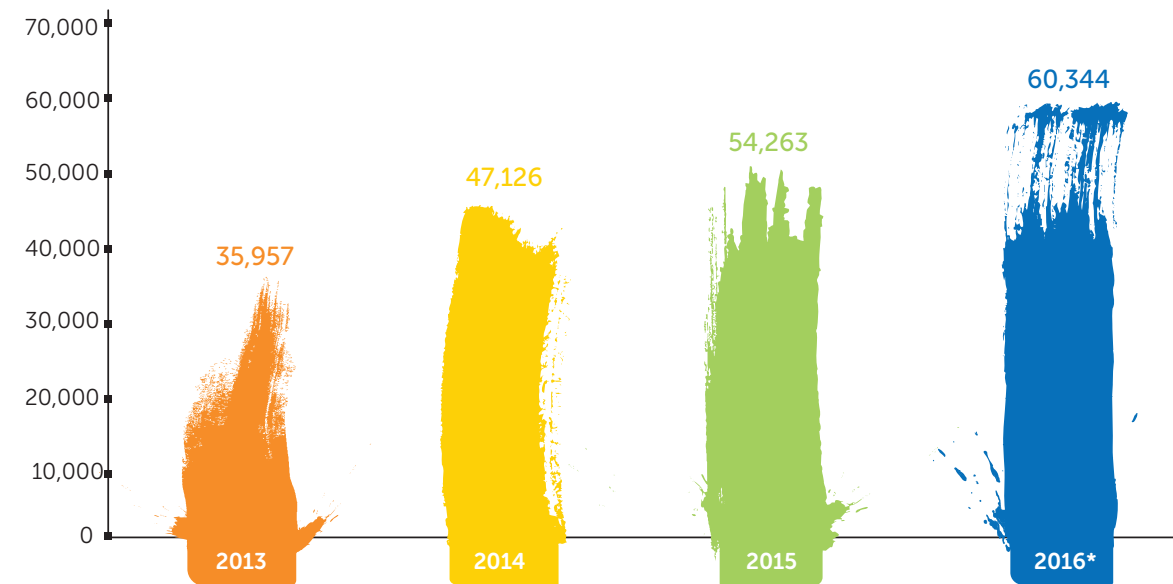


#### SUMMER YOUTH POLICE ACADEMY (NYPD)

This program is designed to give the city's young people a chance to see the work of the NYPD firsthand, and to establish a positive relationship between the Police Department and the city's youth. The goals of the academy are to enhance responsible citizenship, provide positive interaction with police officers, and educate young people about the challenges and responsibilities of police work.



## Summer Youth Employment Participants



\*Estimated

SOURCE: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development



### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES (NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS, DOHMH)

NYC Health + Hospitals offers reproductive health care services for young women, including contraception services (also available at pediatric and adolescent primary care clinics), and access to long-acting reversible contraception through family planning and gynecology clinics.



### LYFE (DOE)

LYFE provides free, high-quality child care to children of student parents. With 34 sites across the five boroughs, LYFE makes it possible for student parents to stay on track toward graduating from high school or completing their high school equivalency.



### DISTRICT 79 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS (DOE)

District 79 schools assist students under the age of 21 who have experienced an interruption in their studies stay on track toward earning a high school or high school equivalency diploma. They also help students build the skills they will need to succeed in post-secondary educational and employment opportunities.



### LGBT HEALTH CENTER (NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS)

The LGBT Health Center provides medical and psychosocial care, including women's health, men's health, transition services for hormone therapy, PrEP, HIV and STD screening and treatment, adolescent care, social work and behavioral health services, and general primary care. The center is an open and honest environment that provides care and respects the unique health needs of all patients.



### SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (DYCD)

This program provides city youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with paid summer employment for up to six weeks in July and August. Participants are paid the New York State minimum wage for their employment, which is administered by community-based organizations in all five boroughs. For example, the Ladders for Leaders program provides professional internships to city youth between the ages of 16 and 21. Participants engage in 30 hours of pre-employment training designed to teach essential workplace readiness skills and business etiquette, followed by hands-on experience. The summer youth employment programs provide invaluable early work experience.



### NYC HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP TRAINING ACADEMY (MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)

Intended as a youth education and violence prevention program, the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy provides free interactive and discussion-based workshops on teen dating violence and healthy relationships to young people all across NYC. All workshops are led by peer educators between the ages of 17 and 24 who have received extensive training on the subjects. The academy works to reach vulnerable youth populations, such as pregnant and parenting youth, runaway homeless youth, and youth in care.

## Conclusion

High school is a time when young people seek increased independence and face complex social challenges. It can be a time of great learning and exploration, but also full of significant risks. The City has invested in a range of programs designed to support teens as they move through their high school years, and it is committed to further investments that ensure that they have access to the resources they need to make safe, smart decisions about themselves, their interactions with peers, and their futures.





**EMERGING**

**ADULTHOOD**



## The Transition to College and/or Work

The period from the late teens to the mid-twenties is a time of development that is distinct from adolescence and young adulthood. Emerging adults are typically no longer under the direct supervision of another adult, yet they have not assumed the “enduring responsibilities” that characterize adulthood, and their brains are still developing. This is a time in which people make lasting choices relating to love, work, and beliefs.<sup>101</sup>

This transition is made smoother when young adults have acquired the cognitive skills, social-emotional skills, and experiences highlighted below, typically by the time of high school graduation, or soon thereafter.





## SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

To be ready for early adulthood, youth must have acquired certain skills and experiences.

### Cognitive Skills

Emerging adulthood is a time of greater complexity of thinking; indeed, areas of the brain continue to develop during this phase of life, particularly the parts used for planning and considering risk/reward structures. Emerging adults are expected to be able to integrate cognitive skills and emotional experiences. They consider the impact their decisions will have on themselves and on others in the future. Risk-taking is measured, and is less influenced by peers and more by individual cost/benefit analysis. Worldviews established during middle and later adolescence are reconsidered during emerging adulthood, as new experiences (college, work, personal relationships) continue to shape emerging adults' understanding of their world.<sup>102</sup>

It is generally accepted that in order to be successful in emerging adulthood, young people should have attained high school proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills. Additionally, the City has identified key indicators that help to promote a successful transition to emerging adulthood.

### Social-Emotional Skills

This is a phase of life during which an individual's relationships with adults (including parents) begins to shift: once thought of as a child, the young person now sees himself or herself as a "fellow adult." Indeed, to transition to emerging adulthood successfully, young people are expected to adhere to the same norms and standards as adults.<sup>103</sup>

**Self-regulation.** For young people in this phase, self-regulation includes planning complex and long-term projects, persisting and self-monitoring progress toward goals, effectively problem-solving to deal with obstacles, delaying gratification, and managing frustration. Young adults who are better able to regulate their emotions and impulses are less prone to engage in violence or substance abuse, or experience negative physical and mental health outcomes. Self-regulation in late adolescence and early adulthood is also linked to greater economic well-being in the future.<sup>104</sup>

**Independence.** As a young person works through the transition to adulthood, the ability to be (and feel) independent becomes increasingly important. The skill of independence is tied to a young person's sense of self as an autonomous actor, the ability to take responsibility for oneself, and the ability to make independent decisions. Although young people at this stage may not yet be fully self-sufficient or self-reliant, they are building the skills that will enable them to become fully independent adults.<sup>105</sup>





## Experiences

**High school graduation.** Graduating from high school opens many doors for young people: it is often a requirement for accessing post-secondary education and many employment opportunities, and is associated with higher incomes and occupational status in adulthood.<sup>106</sup>

**Post-secondary training or education.** Educational attainment is a strong predictor of future well-being, in that young adults who complete higher levels of education are more likely to achieve economic success (via higher wages and more consistent employment), better health outcomes, and higher levels of social-emotional well-being, and have a decreased likelihood of divorce or incarceration.<sup>107</sup>

**Employment.** Experience with employment for young adults is linked to future career benefits, including increased earnings and decreased unemployment throughout adulthood, and positive social outcomes. Research also indicates that youth are most likely to experience positive outcomes if their work experiences are high-quality and allow for an appropriate balance between school and work.<sup>108</sup>

## SPOTLIGHT:

MAYOR'S FUND  
TO ADVANCE  
NEW YORK CITY

### Center for Youth Employment: Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City

The Center for Youth Employment is a public-private initiative designed to dramatically expand workforce access and opportunities for New York City's youth through early mentorship, internships, and skills-building programs. The center is a project of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, launched in partnership with business leaders, philanthropy, and several City agencies and offices.

In two years, the center has more than doubled the number of internships available to New York City students through the Ladders for Leaders program from 475 to 1,035. Relatedly, the center doubled the number of summer jobs for young people in shelter or foster care from 1,065 to 2,078.

The center continues to collaborate with local employers in youth workforce programming, and facilitate greater coordination and strategic thinking among the public and private groups already supporting college- and career-readiness activities. Its goal by 2020 is to connect 100,000 young New Yorkers aged 14 to 24 to summer jobs, mentorship opportunities, and internships each year.

## RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are additional key individual- and community-level factors that influence young people's ability to transition to post-secondary education and adult life. They are listed below, along with some of the City's efforts to address them.

### Individual Factors\*

**Unaddressed mental health conditions.** Late adolescence and the transition to young adulthood is a time when mental illness concerns may be protracted. Suicide is common among this age group—it is the second leading cause of death for teens aged 15 to 19—and about 90 percent of teens who commit suicide have a mental disorder of some kind. There are high rates of major depression for youth in the transition to adulthood, which may interfere with the acquisition of key social-emotional and relational skills and lead to poor adjustment to adulthood. Mental illness of all kinds can get in the way of successful transitions to college and/or work.<sup>109</sup>

**Criminal justice involvement.** Involvement in the criminal justice system has a lasting impact on young people navigating the transition to adulthood. Because of high rates of recidivism, many young adults who enter the prison system end up staying there for large portions of their lives—although some positive experiences such as employment, marriage, parenthood, job stability, and high school graduation are linked to a successful turnaround in early adulthood. Nonetheless, youth who have been incarcerated face diminished income and earnings loss, which are tied to poor outcomes for mental health, physical health, social attachments, and life expectancy.<sup>110</sup>



#### JUSTICE SCHOLARS (DOP)

Justice Scholars is an education-based program serving court-involved young adults living in communities with high rates of poverty and incarceration, and low rates of high school completion. It offers multiple educational tracks, depending on the needs of program participants.



#### JUSTICE PLUS (DOP)

Justice Plus is designed to provide young people on probation with a range of work readiness opportunities. These opportunities include work experience placements, hard/vocational and soft job skills development, and job search and career awareness/planning competencies.



#### JUSTICE COMMUNITY (DOP)

This program engages participants in community benefit projects, education, subsidized work and civic engagement, as well as youth leadership, peer mentorship, life skills, and case management. It also promotes an understanding of participants' legal rights as a means of reducing barriers to future gainful employment.





**Sexual safety.** Because the likelihood of being sexually active increases with a young person’s age, older adolescents and young adults face increasing opportunities to make decisions about their sexual behavior—decisions that can have lasting consequences for their health and well-being. Sex education and supportive programs can help support young people to make safe and healthy decisions.<sup>111</sup>

**Pregnancy/parenthood.** Teen pregnancy is often associated with negative outcomes for young parents and their children, including poor long-term educational outcomes, financial challenges, family instability, and poor cognitive and behavioral outcomes for the children. Most teenage pregnancies are unintended, and older teens have much higher pregnancy rates than younger teens. As older adolescents move into early adulthood, pregnancy and parenthood can make it more difficult to transition to college and/or work.<sup>112</sup>

**Abusive/unhealthy relationships.** Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can severely affect a young adult’s ability to develop cognitive, social-emotional, and relational skills. Victims of dating violence are much more likely to engage in risky or self-harming behaviors than non-victims. Adolescents and young adults are between two and three times more likely to be sexually assaulted or raped than adults over 25, and 93 percent of juvenile victims of sexual assault know their attackers. Furthermore, early dating violence is linked to future domestic violence.<sup>113</sup>



#### EMPLOYMENT WORKS (SBS)

**Employment Works places probationers referred from the DOP in jobs and gives them educational, training, and support services to help prepare for long-term employment.**

**Substance misuse.** While it is not uncommon for young people to experiment with substances like alcohol or cigarettes, heavy and continued use is dangerous for their health and future. Substance misuse can interrupt young people’s ability to successfully navigate the transition to adult life. Although risky behaviors are often tolerated in early or emerging adulthood, research suggests that various substance addictions are most likely to be realized during this stage. Furthermore, social expectations around substance use often contribute to substance misuse patterns for youth in this phase of life.<sup>114</sup>



#### YOUNG ADULT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (DYCD)

**This program provides young adults who are not in school and are not working with short-term paid internships, placements into jobs, education and advanced training, and follow-up services. Job-ready 16- to 24-year-olds are eligible for the program, which is broken down by a 14-week paid orientation, training, and work, followed by nine months of follow-up services and assistance for placement in permanent jobs, training programs, and educational opportunities.**







**Early work experience.** Part-time work in the late adolescent years, both during the school year and in the summer months, has been linked to better employment and economic outcomes for young people. These benefits have been found to last for years into the future. Sometimes referred to as the “invisible curriculum,” early work experiences give future job applicants a better sense of how to effectively apply for work opportunities and function within a work environment, and may make future job applicants more attractive to prospective employers.

**Financial literacy.** Research indicates that financial knowledge is tied to more beneficial financial behaviors, including saving, conservative spending habits, and a better credit score, which all support financial well-being in the long term. Furthermore, strong financial literacy may facilitate the pursuit of post-secondary education and help young people make responsible decisions about employment.<sup>115</sup>

#### Family Factors\*\*

**Positive parenting in the transition to adulthood.** As young people move through adolescence and toward the transition to adulthood, the nature of their relationships with parents and caregivers undergoes significant change. Young adults are best set up to approach the transition to adulthood when they are supported by parents and caregivers who acknowledge and communicate about the changes in this relationship, and strive to strike a balance



#### CUNY ACCELERATED STUDY IN ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS

This program assists students in earning an associate degree within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal support, including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks.

between supporting their young adult children and promoting their independence. Research suggests that positive parenting of young adults centers on communication, mutual respect, financial socialization, and social support.<sup>116</sup>

#### Community Factors\*\*

**Youth leadership and civic engagement opportunities.** Emerging adults benefit from opportunities to serve their communities, build professional skills, and learn about careers in the public sector. Through civic engagement, these young people have meaningful community service experiences that often improve their academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility.

**Access to college prep programs.** College prep programs have been associated with better outcomes for students, including higher college acceptance rates and higher graduation rates. Additionally, college students who complete their bachelor’s degree have significantly higher earnings, on average, than students who do not finish their degree, as well as those that fail to attend college. The economic advantages associated with completing college are large, and open up substantially more opportunities for advancement and promotion.<sup>117</sup>



#### CUNY START

CUNY Start provides intensive preparation in academic reading and writing, pre-college math, and “college success” advisement for students entering CUNY with significant remedial needs based on the results of their CUNY Assessment Tests. The goal of the program is to help students prepare for college-level coursework and reduce or eliminate any remedial needs prior to starting credit-bearing courses.

## Conclusion

Preparing for adulthood is in many ways a lifelong endeavor, the culmination of all of the education and support a young person has received over the course of their childhood. The City’s investment in public education, out-of-school programming, and employment training and guidance for young people across the various developmental stages, taken together, is designed to help children make the transition to successful adulthood.

As our ever-changing world becomes more complicated, greater demands are placed on young people—and on the City to support them at every stage of their development. Additional demands are also placed on the City to allocate resources to services already in place and to develop and invest in new forms of support. Making the correct investments, in sufficient amounts, is one of the City’s greatest challenges. Yet the stakes for the city—and for its young people—couldn’t be higher.

\*The Universal Individual Factors that affect the development of young adults are: physical health and emotional & behavioral health. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*Universal Family Factors that affect the development of young adults are: poverty, housing instability & homelessness, food security & adequate nutrition, safety in the home, substance misuse, mental illness, parental incarceration, family structure, parental involvement in education, and immigration status. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.

\*\*\*The Universal Community Factors that affect the development of young adults are: community violence & crime, health care services, mental/behavioral health services, safe recreational/community spaces, internet access, and community regard for human rights. For more information, see the Overview of the section on Universal Risk and Protective Factors.



# MEASURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Children experience an overall better quality of life when the City makes good use of its limited resources to support their positive and healthy development. Drawing on research and informed by data, we will direct our investments to mitigate children's risks and promote protective factors that can enhance their well-being.

The City has made significant strides in positively supporting its children in several important areas. The number of children entering foster care is at a historic low, teen birth rates have declined, and alcohol consumption among youth has steadily decreased. However, there is more that can be done to build on this progress.

Through this policy framework, the Children's Cabinet aims to help agency leaders better understand the interplay between our programmatic investments and the impact they have on the development of the city's children. Guided by a deeper understanding of child well-being and the impact of risk and protective factors, the Children's Cabinet will examine key indicators that provide insight about the state of the city's children and young adults along the 0-24 continuum—indicators that can help Cabinet agencies gauge overall citywide conditions, as well as assess our progress in supporting New York City's most vulnerable young people.

The indicators presented in this framework are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the ways that the City tracks its work to support child well-being. Other measures, such as those captured in the Mayor's Management Report, funding contract requirements, and independent program evaluations, also help City leaders oversee the impact of public expenditures. The right accountability tool should be matched to what the City is seeking to learn and assess.

For the purpose of this policy framework, indicators have been culled from City agencies and a number of other sources that can surface trends and provide high-level direction to policymakers about the progress being made by young people in key areas along the 0-24 age continuum.

The indicators are structured according to the six transitional periods used in this framework—birth, pre-school, kindergarten, pre-teen years, adolescence, and emerging adulthood—while a few indicators outside of this structure span all ages of the spectrum. Where transitional periods have no indicators listed, City agencies with the Children's Cabinet will work toward developing indicators that best represent these sections and are aligned with this framework. What follows below are ways the indicators can be used, interpreted, and developed for each transitional period.



## **BIRTH: The Transition to Infancy**

The health of newborns is inextricably tied to the health of pregnant women. Very young child health indicators—infant mortality, low birth weight, and late or no prenatal care are considered proxies that determine early child well-being—very often signal problems in health care provision, access, or quality. The combination of infant mortality rates (infant deaths per 1,000 births) and number of babies born at low birthweights (less than 5 lbs., 8 oz. at birth) signal whether babies will thrive during the early years and if targeted interventions are needed. These indicators, which are available by race, ethnicity, and community district, allow the City to measure disparities across race/ethnicity and geography.



## **PRE-SCHOOL: The Transition to Organized Social Settings**

The City measures pre-school access for three- and four-year-olds, as well as key indicators around physical health. Additionally, the City measures the quality of pre-K settings, and is conducting a thorough, rigorous evaluation of Pre-K for All impact. There are also numerous initiatives to promote quality and safety in childhood settings. In the coming years, the Children's Cabinet will work across agencies to collect better data on young children to illustrate needs as well as improved well-being.



## **KINDERGARTEN: The Transition to Elementary School**

Access to early screenings and assessments, as well as supports such as early educational activities, are critical to healthy child development. Here, the Cabinet has an opportunity to develop a set of indicators that inform this critical transition to elementary school.



## **PRE-TEEN YEARS: The Transition to Middle School**

In light of the City's emphasis on universal afterschool and restorative justice approaches to improve school climate, the Children's Cabinet will explore ways to collect afterschool and summer camp enrollment and make sure that it is readily accessible.



## **ADOLESCENCE: The Transition to High School**

There are multiple indicators in the youth risk behavior survey that measure both risks and illustrate healthy choices. To better understand this transition stage, the Children's Cabinet is also interested in understanding healthy sexual reproductive choices (i.e., percent of students sexually active and using contraception/condoms) percent of students at a healthy weight (between fifth and 85th percentile BMI); and students who expressed need for and accessed mental health services.



## **EMERGING ADULTHOOD: The Transition to College and/or Work**

Finally, to round out the discussion of school performance and young adulthood and to understand what the future holds for the city's emerging adults, the Cabinet is focused on indicators related to youth employment levels, as well as college readiness, enrollment, and persistence.

## MOVING FORWARD

The measures above are related to child well-being and we know they are important to understand. The Children's Cabinet will use these initial indicators to inform its work now, and will continue to identify additional measures by convening focus groups and working across the Cabinet to capture what is needed and what works for children. For instance, as the City collects Adverse Childhood Experiences data, in addition to measures focused on early childhood cognitive development, we will learn more about how to prevent detect, and respond to early trauma. There will also be opportunities to explore additional programmatic investments. Moreover, by measuring progress along an agreed-upon set of indicators, we can align our diverse agencies to work together with a shared understanding of priorities and a more coordinated approach to making policy decisions and program investments.



# INDICATORS

INDICATOR	LATEST DATA	TREND	DATA RANGE (Years)
1 CEO Child Poverty Rate (<Age 18)	24.0%		2005-2014
2 Federal Child Poverty Rate (<Age 18)	29.6%		2005-2014
3 Number of Families with Children in Shelter	11,819		2003-2015
4 Child Victimization Rate (<Age 17)	15		2010-2015
5 Families Entering ACS Purchased Preventive Services	12,438		2011-2015
6 Children Entering Foster Care (<Age 21)	4,104		2003-2015
7 Infant Mortality Rate	4.2		2000-2014
8 Percent of Pre-Term Births	8.8%		2000-2014
9 Percent of Low Birthweight Births	8.2%		2000-2014
10 Enrollment in pre-K	68,647		2014-2016
11 New Elevated Lead Cases in Children (<Age 6)	923		2005-2012
12 Third to Eighth Grade ELA Proficiency Rate	30.4%		2012-2014
13 Third to Eighth Grade Math Proficiency Rate	35.2%		2012-2014
14 Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Sexual Activity	31.2%		2001-2013
15 Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Alcohol Consumption	24.7%		2001-2013
16 Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Binge Drinking	10.8%		2001-2013
17 Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Cigarette Smoking	8.2%		2001-2013
18 Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Marijuana Use	16.2%		2001-2013
19 Percent of NYC Public School Students in Healthy Weight Range	56.4%		2007-2013
20 Percent Public School Students Graduating in Four Years	70.5%		2004-2014
21 Percent of College-Ready Public High School Graduates	49%		2005-2015
22 Enrollment in Summer Youth Employment Program	54,263		2009-2015
23 Percent of Youth Ages 18-24 in School or Employed	84.5%		2005-2014
24 Percent of Public High School Students Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education	53.0%		2007-2014
25 Percent of Women with Postpartum Depression Symptoms (PPD)	12.0%		NA-2012
26 Teen Birth Rate (<Age 20)	19.4		2000-2014

# DEFINITIONS

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	SOURCE
CEO Child Poverty Rate (<Age 18)	Percent of children under 18 in poverty based on the CEO poverty measure. In addition to pre-tax cash (the income measure used in the Federal measure), the CEO measure includes the effect of income and payroll taxes, and the value of in-kind nutritional and housing assistance. Non-discretionary spending for commuting to work, child care, and out-of-pocket medical care are accounted for as deductions from income. The measure also adjusts a U.S.-wide threshold developed for the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure to reflect the relatively high cost of housing in New York City.	NYC Center for Economic Opportunity
Federal Child Poverty Rate (<Age 18)	Percent of children under 18 in poverty, based on the official poverty measure.	U.S. Census, American Community Survey
Number of Families with Children in Shelter	Average number of families with children ages 18 and under in shelter per day.	NYC Mayor's Management Report
Child Victimization Rate (<Age 17)	Number of unique children age 17 and under with indicated maltreatment, per 1,000 children in the population.	NYC Administration for Children's Services
Families Entering ACS Purchased Preventive Services	The number of new purchased preventive service cases. Preventive services help to promote safety, permanency, and well-being for children and their families in their own homes and communities. Purchased preventive services are provided by ACS through contracted providers.	NYC Mayor's Management Report
Children Entering Foster Care (<Age 21)	The number of children entering foster care. Includes children with repeat admissions into foster care.	NYC Mayor's Management Report
Infant Mortality Rate	Number of infant deaths occurring within the first year of life per 1,000 live births.	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Epiquery
Percent of Pre-Term Births	Percent of live births that were pre-term (<37 weeks).	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Epiquery
Percent of Low Birthweight Births	Percent of live births with low birthweight (under 2,500 gms).	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Epiquery
Enrollment in pre-K	Enrollment in full-day pre-K programs.	NYC Department of Education
New Elevated Lead Cases in Children (<Age 6)	Number of new cases of elevated lead levels (children younger than 6).	DOHMH Lead Poisoning Report
Third to Eighth Grade ELA Proficiency	Percent of public school students meeting the English Language Arts (ELA) test proficiency standards of level 3 or higher on ELA exams.	NYC Department of Education



INDICATOR	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Third to Eighth Grade Math Proficiency	Percent of public school students meeting the math proficiency standards of level 3 or higher on math exams.	NYC Department of Education
Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Sexual Activity	Percent of NYC Public High School students that report ever having sexual intercourse.	New York Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Alcohol Consumption	Percent of NYC Public High School students that report having at least one drink of alcohol in the last 30 days.	New York Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Binge Drinking	Percent of NYC Public High School students that report binge drinking in the last 30 days.	New York Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Cigarette Smoking	Percent of NYC Public High School students that report smoking cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days.	New York Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Percent of NYC Public High School Students Reporting Marijuana Use	Percent of NYC Public High School students that report using marijuana in the last 30 days.	New York Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Percent of NYC Public School Students in Healthy Weight Range	Percent of NYC Public School Students in grades K-8 in the healthy weight range.	NYC Department of Education FitnessGram
Percent Public School Students Graduating in Four Years	Percent of students in each cohort that graduated within four years.	NYC Department of Education
Percent of College-Ready Public High School Graduates	Percent of High School Graduates who met the College Readiness Index (CRI). The CRI is the percentage of students in the school's four year cohort who have graduated with a Regents Diploma and met CUNY's standards for college readiness in English and mathematics or graduated, enrolled, and persisted in college through the beginning of their third semester within six years.	NYC Department of Education
Enrollment in Summer Youth Employment Program	Number of youth who enrolled in DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program.	NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
Percent of Youth Ages 18-24 in School or Employed	Percent of youth ages 18-24 who are in school or employed.	U.S. Census, 2014 American Community Survey One Year Estimates
Percent of Public High School Students Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education	Percent of students who enrolled in post-secondary education within six months after graduation).	NYC Department of Education
Percent of Women with Postpartum Depression Symptoms (PPD)	Percent of women who answered "always" or "often" to questions related to maternal depression (PHQ-2) on the NYS Pregnancy Monitoring Assessment Monitoring Survey.	NYS Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey
Teen Birth Rate (<Age 20)	Fertility rate per 1,000 Women Under Age 20.	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Epiquery

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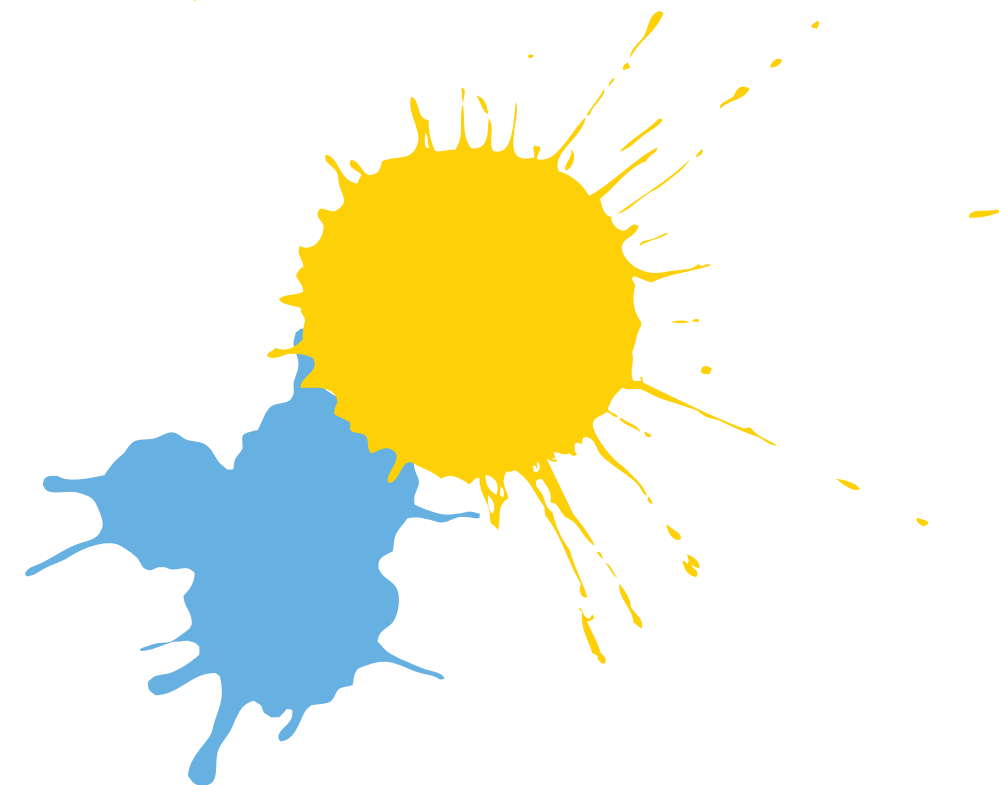
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- Arnette Scott
- Celia Green
- Danielle Poole
- Diana Zarumeno
- Dionne McNeil
- Khari Edwards
- Lori Podvesker
- Melanie Mendonca
- Nancy Northrop
- Natasha Welsh
- Nicole Job
- Pamela Stewart
- Shino Tanikawa
- Vanessa Leung





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## NOTES



