



## Preschool News and Notes

An Update from the **Denver Preschool Program**

July 27, 2007

Gloria J. Higgins  
Chair, Board of Directors

### **Denver Preschool Program (DPP) Gears Up for Denver Families**

Thanks to Denver's taxpayers, our city is increasing accessibility to quality preschool programs for every family with a four-year-old child. The challenge of launching a brand new, independent organization for Denver families is one filled with a large number of exacting, detailed tasks. Over the past few weeks, the Board of Directors, Board of Advisors and the DPP staff have marked a number of important milestones in gearing up our program, aiming toward the first enrollment of four-year-olds in August.

### **Open For Business!**

The **Denver Preschool Program** has opened an office in the Mile High United Way building, and will soon launch its website (in both English and Spanish) at [www.denverpreschoolprogram.com](http://www.denverpreschoolprogram.com).

Adele Phelan was hired as the Interim Executive Director while the board of directors conducts its search for the program's full-time leader. Adele is a veteran of decades of work in education, ranging from Head Start to the presidency of a college. She has served in numerous roles to benefit children and youth and the quality of education in the Denver region and throughout the country. She has served as President of The Clayton Foundation, a consultant to the Mayor's Office of Education and Children, the Colorado Health Institute, Caring for Colorado, and the Buell and Piton foundations.

### **President/CEO Search**

Choosing a top-flight, full time executive director requires a wide, formal search. We have engaged Peak HR Consulting to find us a slate of excellent candidates and we expect to commence interviews very soon.

### **Administrative Vendor**

We have identified a nationally respected company – ACS Inc. – to administer the details of our program and ensure top quality and strong customer service for parents, children and providers. ACS Inc. will have the responsibility of tracking student attendance and facilitating the payment of the tuition credits to the preschool provider.

### **Quality Rating Process**

We have received a collaborative and very strong proposal from the three rating organizations to support quality preschool programs anticipated by the City Ordinance. These are local chapters of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Denver Association of Family Child Care, and Colorado's own Qualistar Early Learning Quainter administers a 4-star rating scale that includes a quality improvement plan for providers. By having one process in place for all three organizations, we will eliminate confusion and duplication and provide a smoother process for our providers to achieve their quality rating and an easy way for parents to understand the ratings. Assistance for providers to be rated for quality is scheduled to begin in September.

### **Tuition Credits**

Our Board of Advisors has been working tirelessly to develop the specifics of the tuition credit calculation process. Amounts will be set for the credit for Denver families on a sliding scale based on family income, family size and program quality.

### **Reaching Out to Families**

We will begin to reach out to families through current preschool providers. Since the preschool providers will have an active role in communicating with families, we will work with them on the details of the process. .

### **Reaching Out to Child Care and Early Education Providers**

The first group of providers to receive an information packet about the program will be those who have already achieved a quality rating. This allows us to identify available slots at each of these providers to quickly target schools with excess capacity.

Through our quality rating partners, we will begin the process of providing currently unrated preschool providers with the information and assistance they need to become qualified DPP providers.

## **DPP Offers Path to Preschool Quality Improvement**

A cornerstone of the **Denver Preschool Program** is the opportunity for providers to receive a quality rating from one of three highly respected organizations: Qualistar Early Learning, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Denver Association of Family Child Care. Every participating provider will agree to enter or continue in the quality improvement system. DPP specifically provides quality improvement funds for providers to assist in meeting the criteria to become rated.

A key goal is to ensure that our program will have a diversity of providers who reflect the realities in the current marketplace.

## **Our Leadership Team**

The **Denver Preschool Program** development has been the responsibility of many, very dedicated individuals. I would like to personally thank them for their long hours of work and the valuable strategic thinking they have contributed to this very exciting Denver program. The important tasks that have been accomplished, combined with the outreach process that will be implemented will allow DPP to begin enrolling children in August and begin the flow of funds to families in September.

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