



PRESS RELEASE

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PRE4CLE RELEASES “PRESCHOOL REIMAGINED” ANNUAL REPORT TO OUTLINE THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND STRATEGIES FOR RECOVERY

CLEVELAND, OHIO – PRE4CLE, Cleveland’s plan to expand access to high-quality preschool, released its annual report today. The report shares details of PRE4CLE’s outcomes during the past year and outlines a comprehensive framework to support Ohio’s early care and education system during the COVID-19 crisis and recovery.

[“Preschool Reimagined”](#) details the ways in which early education, like most industries, has been hit hard by COVID-19. Widespread closures, safety concerns, staffing shortages, and changes in parental employment have caused unprecedented disruption within early education, and are threatening the viability of a system that is critical to our community’s ability to recover.

Katie Kelly, Executive Director of PRE4CLE, said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare many of the weaknesses in our early education system, and those challenges are reflected starkly in this report. However, we also think that this is an opportunity to build a newly resilient system that offers greater access to high-quality care and education for children, reliable and affordable care to families as they head back to work, and fair compensation for child care and early education professionals.”

Throughout 2020 PRE4CLE has been heavily engaged in mitigating the effect of the pandemic on Cleveland’s youngest citizens and their families and translating the lessons they have learned into advocacy through their “Build Back Stronger” agenda. Much of that work is focused on actions at the state and federal levels to encourage leaders to reimagine the ways in which our current child care programs are supported, including helping programs to reopen safely and continue to operate during this period of record low enrollment.

Despite this years’ challenges, PRE4CLE reports several positive developments for Cleveland’s preschool programs, including significant gains in the number of programs participating in Ohio’s quality rating program for early education, Step Up To Quality. Additionally, PRE4CLE is launching a new initiative, The Cleveland Early Learning Spaces project, which will look to renovate and rebuild early learning facilities to further enhance the quality of early education throughout the city.

PRE4CLE is working to bring stakeholders in Cleveland and throughout the state together to address the urgent needs of early education, especially as Ohio heads into a state budget process and the federal government resumes work on a relief package early in 2021.

Marcia Egbert, Cleveland Early Childhood Compact Co-Chair and Senior Program Officer for Human Services at The George Gund Foundation, said this plan is important for everyone. “The information in this report is Cleveland specific, but Cleveland's story is not unique. The same effects are being felt across the state and the country. Indeed, because of PRE4CLE and its strong commitment to supporting and building high-quality early childhood opportunities, we have a pathway to survive and even thrive through this pandemic.”

About PRE4CLE: *PRE4CLE is Cleveland’s plan to expand access to high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-olds in the city. PRE4CLE helps families find and enroll in high-quality preschool programs, connects preschool providers to tools and resources to increase their quality and serve more children, and provides strategic leadership and advocacy to accelerate the availability of high-quality preschool in Cleveland. PRE4CLE fulfills a core priority of Cleveland’s Plan for Transforming Schools and is led by the Cleveland Early Childhood Compact. For a copy of the full annual report, visit www.PRE4CLE.org/annualreport.*

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