Advance kindergarten readiness
Build a strong system
Champion Cleveland’s future

2021 ANNUAL REPORT
PRE4CLE
Dear friends and partners,
This was another challenging year for the preschool system in Cleveland—in some ways, 2021 was even more challenging than last year. While much of the world has returned to “normal,” early childhood providers spent the year dealing with new COVID variants and surges that shut down classrooms and led to teachers and students missing time in school when they were ill. The Great Resignation also hit early childhood providers hard, with many still struggling to hire teachers and staff to operate centers and keep all their classrooms open.

And yet, 2021 brought exciting opportunities and changes to our community and to PRE4CLE. In May, Nancy Mendez was hired as Starting Point’s new President & CEO. We’re thrilled to continue our strong partnership with Starting Point and to have the opportunity to work with such a thoughtful leader as we look to the future.

We also launched our first cohort of Cleveland Early Learning Spaces, an initiative focused on ensuring that every child can attend a high-quality early learning program in a high-quality facility. We are excited to begin this work and to ramp it up over the next few years to reach an estimated 150 early learning centers and homes city-wide.

We continued to advocate for Cleveland’s young children and their families through a challenging state budget. This resulted in removing language that would have eliminated the requirement that state-funded early learning programs participate in Ohio’s quality rating system for early learning, Step Up To Quality. Additionally, PRE4CLE’s advocacy helped to secure an increase in eligibility for Ohio’s subsidized child care system, allowing more families to access child care as they return to work.

As we look to our future, we are working to finalize the latest version of the PRE4CLE Plan in a way that ensures our community is meeting the moment to recover from COVID-19, be more focused on racial equity, and create a structure that best suits our goals and continues to build momentum for and collaboration around preschool.

Thank you for your continued support of Cleveland’s youngest citizens.

Sincerely,

• Eric Gordon  
Co-Chair, Cleveland Early Childhood Compact and CEO, Cleveland Metropolitan School District

• Marcia Egbert  
Co-Chair, Cleveland Early Childhood Compact and Program Director for Thriving Families and Social Justice, The George Gund Foundation

• Katie Kelly  
Executive Director, PRE4CLE
Over the past two years, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has pushed the fragile early childhood education system to the limit. While much of the world has returned to “normal,” early childhood providers are still struggling, and the system has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels of operation.

### HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3- TO 5-YEAR OLDS IN CLEVELAND</td>
<td>10,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASELINE ENROLLMENT (2013)</td>
<td>2,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLMENT IN DECEMBER 2019</td>
<td>4,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLMENT IN JUNE 2021</td>
<td>2,644</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the graph above demonstrates, enrollment in high-quality preschool has been set back significantly and is 45 percent lower than it was before the shutdown in March of 2020.

While preschool enrollment has dropped, so too has the number of available preschool seats. More than 1,000 high-quality preschool seats that were available in December 2019 have not come back—an 18 percent decrease. While only eight programs permanently closed, much of this capacity loss is due to a shortage of early childhood teachers and staff, with many providers reporting that they have classrooms sitting empty because they cannot find teachers to operate them. Early care and education teachers make an average of $11-$13 per hour in Ohio.¹ Since the pandemic began, many early care and education
professionals have left the system for better-paying and less stressful jobs.

Despite these challenges, there is still good news in Cleveland’s early childhood system. There are currently 233 high-quality rated preschool providers in the city with 65 percent of all center-based and 35 percent of all home-based preschool providers in Cleveland rated high-quality. More than two thirds of children enrolled in preschool are in high-quality programs and nearly half are in five-star rated programs.

These incredible results would not be possible without our partners at Starting Point, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood – Invest Children who have supported preschool providers across the city to earn their Step Up To Quality ratings and continue to increase their quality. We are so grateful for their continued partnership and dedication to Cleveland’s young children.

In the following pages of this report, you will begin to see the ways we are planning to grow and sustain these partnerships with the goal of helping our early childhood system recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and build a more resilient system that offers high-quality care and education to children, reliable and affordable care to families, and fair compensation for child care and early education professionals.


NOTE: High-quality preschools include those rated 3, 4, or 5 stars in Ohio’s Step Up To Quality Rating system. Lower quality preschools are those that have received 1- and 2-star ratings. Population data based on the US Census Bureau, Census 2010 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates.
In 2021 PRE4CLE launched the first cohort of Cleveland Early Learning Spaces, an initiative focused on ensuring that every child can attend a high-quality early learning program in a high-quality facility. The program offers community-based early learning providers grants and other financial supports, professional development, and technical assistance to complete facility renovations using best practices that support the health, safety, learning, and development of young children.

PRE4CLE is partnering with Starting Point and IFF, a leader in nonprofit development in the Midwest, to take Early Learning Spaces to scale across the city of Cleveland. PRE4CLE is working with public and private partners to identify funding and strategies to expand Early Learning Spaces to an estimated 150 early learning centers and homes city-wide.
In 2021, PRE4CLE continued to focus our advocacy on support for children, families, and early learning providers as they experienced the ongoing impact of COVID-19, while also working to ensure that state-level resources for early learning access and quality were maintained and increased.

During the state budget process, PRE4CLE worked with statewide partners to successfully advocate for the removal of language that would have eliminated the requirement that state-funded early learning programs participate in Ohio’s quality rating system for early learning, Step Up To Quality. Additionally, PRE4CLE’s advocacy helped to secure an increase in eligibility for Ohio’s subsidized child care system — from 130% of the federal poverty level to 142% — allowing more families to access child care as they return to work.

At the federal level, PRE4CLE worked with Northeast Ohio’s federal delegation to advocate for critical COVID-relief resources for early learning providers. In March of 2021, Ohio received $1.3 billion in ARPA funding for child care programs, providing a critical lifeline for many preschool programs struggling to operate during the pandemic.

Expand access to quality
Over the past seven years of PRE4CLE’s history, we have been reporting our results against a series of system-level and child-level benchmarks, which we regularly revisited and updated to ensure we had challenging, yet achievable, goals that would push our work forward.

Historically, PRE4CLE consistently met and exceeded many of our benchmarks, but that all changed when COVID-19 started. The already-fragile early childhood system was pushed even closer to the brink of collapse, and while some sectors have recovered and many people have returned to a more normal existence, early childhood providers, young children, and their families are still struggling.

The past two years have pushed PRE4CLE to think about how we measure success and how we might report about the early childhood system in the future. We do not have Kindergarten Readiness Assessment data from the fall of 2020 because the assessment was not administered to enough students to provide reliable data. Our enrollment data show that while preschools and child care programs are open, an ongoing early childhood workforce crisis and families’ concerns over their children’s health and safety have kept preschool enrollment low, even as K-12 enrollment has rebounded.

As we look to 2022 and beyond, PRE4CLE is relying on the expertise of our partners to help us shape realistic benchmarks that will push the early childhood system toward recovery, support families’ needs, drive Cleveland’s economy, and create opportunities for innovation.
Created and refined with input from hundreds of community stakeholders, early learning providers, and families, the PRE4CLE Plan is a detailed, strategic roadmap that guides the collective work of the Cleveland community as we strive together to increase access to high-quality preschool.

In 2022, the Cleveland Early Childhood Compact, led by the staff of PRE4CLE and Starting Point, will again engage early learning providers and partners to update the PRE4CLE Plan based on the new challenges and opportunities for children, families, and early learning providers as our community emerges from the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition to rebuilding from COVID-19, PRE4CLE and our partners will examine the PRE4CLE Plan to incorporate new strategies to support the early learning workforce, and strengthen partnerships with new leadership within the Cleveland community.

Finally, PRE4CLE will look to update how we report on Cleveland’s progress as a community toward the goal of increasing kindergarten readiness and preschool access.

We are excited to share these updated plans in the second half of 2022, and we look forward to starting a new phase of our work supported by the collective expertise and commitment of the Cleveland community.
The work of PRE4CLE is supported by many organizations in the Cleveland community that are not represented on the Cleveland Early Childhood Compact. Without these additional partners, we would not be able to meet our goals. We are extremely grateful to these organizations and the Cleveland community for championing high-quality early childhood education.

PRE4CLE is deeply grateful to our 2021 philanthropic partners for their generosity and support:
- The Abington Foundation
- Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation
- The Cleveland Foundation
- The George Gund Foundation
- The Hershey Foundation
- Higley Fund
- PNC Foundation
- The Thomas White Foundation
- Treu-Mart Fund

NOTE ABOUT DATA: All data from this report reflect progress as of June 2021. Data were gathered from several sources, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for providing their time and expertise. In particular, we thank Starting Point and Case Western Reserve University, through the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, which worked with PRE4CLE to analyze data on high-quality preschool sites and child enrollment. We also thank our high-quality providers for willingly sharing their data with Starting Point.
PRE4CLE Providers by Neighborhood

Bellaire-Puritas
• Artemus Ward
• Little Critters Early Learning Center
• Puritas Head Start

Broadway-Slavic Village
• A.B. Hart
• Brightside Academy
• Mound
• Villa Head Start
• Warner Girls’ Leadership Academy

Brooklyn Centre
• Corinna Bryant
• Denison
• Maribel Guerra

Buckeye-Shaker Square
• Fundamentals Early Childhood Development Academy
• Sunbeam

Buckeye-Woodhill
• Harvey Rice
• Little Village Home Child Care

Central
• Bingham Early Learning Center
• Day Care for Future Scholars
• DiKe School of the Arts
• The Early Childhood Center at Arbor Park
• Friendly Inn Settlement
• George Washington Carver
• King Kennedy Head Start
• Marion Sterling
• Outhwaite Head Start
• William Patrick Day Head Start
• YWCA

Clark-Fulton
• Market Square Horizon Education Center
• Walton

Collinwood-Nottingham
• East Clark
• Hanna Gibbons
• Intergenerational Day Care
• Kenneth W. Clement Boys’ Leadership Academy

Cudell
• Marion Seltzer
• Willard Child Development Center

Detroit Shoreway
• Gordon Square Early Learning Center
• Halle
• Jireh Learning Center
• Joseph Gallagher
• St. Augustine Manor Child Enrichment Center
• Waverly

Downtown
• Cleveland Fed Kids
• Developing Character
• Smarty Pants Learning Center

Euclid-Green
• Carl B. Stokes Head Start
• Euclid Park

Fairfax
• Bolton
• Quincy Place Early Learning Program
• St. Adalbert

Glenville
• Apples of Gold Child Care II
• Brightside Academy-Glenville
• Everchanging Educational Center
• Franklin D. Roosevelt
• Glenville Early Learning Center
• Iowa-Maple
• Mary M. Bethune
• Murtis Taylor at Kathryn R. Tyler Center
• Patrick Henry
• Wade Early Learning Center

Hough
• Daniel E. Morgan
• Lexington Bell Early Childhood Center
• Mary B. Martin
• Wade Park

Jefferson
• Garfield
• Wilson’s Home Daycare

Kamm’s
• Care-A-Lot Daycare & Achievement Center
• Clara E. Westropp
• Douglas MacArthur Girls’ Leadership Academy
• Newton D. Baker
• Riverside
• Triskett Station Horizon Education Center

Kinsman
• Anton Grudina
• Rainbow Terrace Head Start

Lee-Harvard
• Adlai Stevenson
• Charles W. Eliot
• Louis Stokes Head Start

Mount Pleasant
• Andrew J. Rickoff
• Murtis Taylor Child Enrichment Program

North Shore Collinwood
• Apples of Gold 3
• A Jubilee Academy
• Memorial
• Oliver Perry
• Salvation Army Grovewood

Ohio City
• Lakeview Terrace Head Start
• The Music Settlement
• Orchard Hale STEM
• Paul Dunbar
• Urban Community School

Old Brooklyn
• Benjamin Franklin
• Loving Cup Kids Academy
• Old Brooklyn
• Old Brooklyn Horizon Education Center
• William Cullen Bryant
• William Rainey Harper

PRE4CLE Staff

• Katie Kelly
  Executive Director

• Nancy Mendez
  President & CEO, Starting Point

• Michelle Bledsoe
  Director of Evaluation and Outreach

• Michelle Connavino
  Director of Communication and Special Initiatives

• Britton Hill
  Community Outreach and Engagement Specialist

• Alyse Mitcham
  Community Outreach
  and Engagement Specialist

St.Clair-Superior
• Brown’s Children’s Paradise
  Family Child Care Service
• St. Phillip Neri Head Start
• Willson

Stockyard
• Brightside Academy
• Clark
• Salvation Army Ohio City
• Thomas Jefferson

Tremont
• Buhner
• Horizon Learning Center
• Luis Munoz Marin
• Merrick House
• Scranton
• Tremont Montessori

Union-Miles
• Blissfully Blessed Beginners
• Chapelside Academy
• Charles Dickens
• Miles
• Nathan Hale
• Robert Jamison
• Union Miles Head Start

University
• The Music Settlement

West Boulevard
• Almira
• Louis Agassiz
• Milagros Cruz
• St. Ignatius Head Start
• Wilbur Wright