



# **The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) Program: Justification for State-Wide Expansion:**

A Complement to QUALITYstarsNY

## **A note from QUALITYstarsNY Senior Director, Leslie Capello**

As New York State's Quality Rating and Improvement System for early childhood education, QUALITYstarsNY is designed to provide the critical support administrators and educators need to sustain a high-quality early childhood program.

On behalf of the QUALITYstarsNY team, we are pleased to have had the opportunity to partner with the Cloudsplitter Foundation on the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) initiative over the last three years. This partnership allowed us to pair QUALITYstarsNY's model of continuous quality improvement with monetary awards provided by Cloudsplitter Foundation directly to administrators and educators who committed to and maintained progress on increasing and sustaining high quality practices.

This report helps to demonstrate the impact that providing the resources and framework for quality, as well as increased compensation, can have on motivating educators and administrators to deepen their high-quality practices and support professional growth—resulting in lifelong benefits to children.

### **QUALITYstarsNY's Continuous Quality Improvement Model**

Since its inception, QUALITYstarsNY has focused its evidence-based practices to ensure that New York's children and families can access high-quality early learning opportunities. QUALITYstarsNY currently supports nearly 2,000 early childhood programs in all regulated settings that collectively serve nearly 90,000 children.

Every step of QUALITYstarsNY's work with participating programs is designed to support and engage them in meaningful work to deepen their understanding and implementation of best practices. QUALITYstarsNY provides the framework for high-quality early childhood education programming through its Quality Standards, which were developed by New York's early childhood experts. All programs participating in QUALITYstarsNY are rated on a 5-Star scale every three years using the Quality Standards. QUALITYstarsNY supports participating programs with individualized guidance and a full complement of resources to put the Standards into practice to enhance and sustain their program quality.

### **Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce**

The CCEA partnership has been a great opportunity to provide both professional and monetary support to a workforce that has historically been undercompensated despite the importance of their work. At QUALITYstarsNY, we believe that all early childhood educators are committed to the young children they work with and are intrinsically motivated to improve their practice. However, the myriad demands and strains on the early childhood workforce can act as barriers to prioritizing quality. When the workforce is properly supported and fairly compensated, quality flourishes—as exemplified in the survey responses captured in this report.

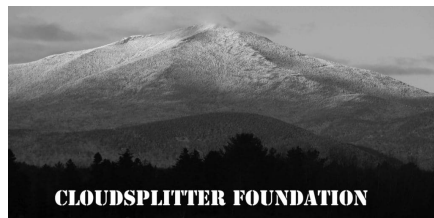
### **Looking Forward**

Initiatives and partnerships that support the workforce coupled with a model for quality benefits the entire early childhood community and produces a strong return on investment for New York State as a whole. All early childhood professionals deserve to be fairly compensated. The CCEA initiative offers important insights on opportunities to move our state forward on the path toward that ultimate goal.

QUALITYstarsNY remains poised to support any further state efforts to fairly compensate the workforce and support them in achieving their program's quality aspirations.







**Cloudsplitter Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 1357**  
**Saranac Lake, NY 12983**

November 22, 2023

### **An introduction from the study's sponsor**

The attached report documents the results of a three-year experiment to see if highly-targeted cash awards could help improve the recruitment, retention, and skill levels of critically-needed childcare workers in a test area of NY state. We believe the results speak for themselves, and we are now asking the state to incorporate this approach into its early childhood programs. We believe this can be done almost seamlessly, as the structures and mechanisms are all in place to roll the program out to an ever-expanding geography. The long-term payback can be immense, as the report will show.

The Cloudsplitter Foundation's investment in early childhood education started after I listened to a 2011 Planet Money podcast entitled "Why Preschool Can Save The World" that explained the long-term effects of early childhood education. We already knew that we northern New Yorkers were living in a childcare desert, but what we did not know was what the implications of this lack of quality early childcare meant to our kids for the rest of their lives. The program introduced us to remarkable findings that set us on a course of action that has dominated our work for a dozen years. We became one of the founding members of the Birth-to-Three (BT3) Alliance that has been improving the lives of the approximately 5,000 under-four-year-olds in the northeastern reaches of the state for over a decade.

Four years ago, we realized that we needed a way to put money in the pockets of childcare workers while increasing their recruitment, retention, and skill levels. The program we designed provides cash incentives to childcare providers who enter into a continuous quality-improvement program administered the New York State's QUALITYstarsNY program which is funded by the state and administered by the City University of New York (CUNY). It puts quality improvement specialists into the field to train and certify childcare providers. The program itself uses a five-step rating scheme where each step requires that the provider adds skills.

The QUALITYstarsNY folks pointed out that providing awards to their providers had always been part of their long-term plan, but that funding had never materialized. It seemed to us that this could be a marriage made in heaven: if we could provide the awards mechanism and measure the outcomes as a case study, perhaps we could then induce the state to take over such funding in an expanded program.

We unveiled the Childcare Excellence Awards program in early 2021. It provides a series of five \$2,000 awards to childcare providers who are certified by an independent panel made-up of the local QUALITYstarsNY specialist and the head of the local childcare coordinating council. They certify that awardees have advanced a level on the QUALITYstarsNY ladder, each step of which gets another \$2,000 award for the provider.

The program is now ending its third year and, as the report will show, as hoped the program is improving teacher recruiting, retention, and quality. This report is the result of a collaboration between our foundation, the professionals at QUALITYstarsNY, and the researchers at Adirondack Research. Our thanks go out to everyone who has helped with this journey.

**Ernest E. ("Lee") Keet, Chair**

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Jodi Collins Keet. Nancy R. Keet. Tracy Ormsbee. Barbara Rice. Ellen Rocco. Holly Wolff***

## ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Ashley Milne is a Research Associate at Adirondack Research with extensive policy development and analysis experience. She has previously advised legislative bodies at the Scottish Parliament, the United States House of Representatives, and the New York State Assembly. Ashley has also worked with the Harvard-affiliated think tank, The Christensen Institute, providing policy consulting and best practices in k-12 education. Currently, she's an active member of the Town Board for the Town of Harrietstown in Saranac Lake where she's dedicated to creating a brighter future for her two small children.

Ezra Schwartzberg, Ph.D. is the Director at Adirondack Research. Ezra has fifteen years of experience with environmental policy and education. Previous work includes establishing baseline documentation on the Adirondack Region's Birth to Three early childcare and education network. Adirondack Research is a contract research firm located in upstate New York that focuses on Environmental and social science research and communications. Adirondack Research was approached by Cloudsplitter Foundation to survey CCEA award recipients to assess the impacts of this award program on supporting QUALITYstarsNY.

## ABOUT THE FUNDER

The Cloudsplitter Foundation has played a pivotal role in the administration and spearheading the implementation of the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) initiative. Through the Childcare Excellence Award Program, Cloudsplitter Foundation funded and managed the distribution of awards in the form of a \$2000 personal check to childcare providers and educators who participated and excelled in quality improvement programs under the auspices of QUALITYstarsNY. These awards recognized and incentivized the hard work and dedication of early childhood professionals to eligible childcare providers and educators who met certain criteria and achieved specific milestones within the program. Ultimately, these awards contributed to the improvement of early childhood education in the state and has helped to improve the livelihoods for children and families in their earliest years.

## ABOUT QUALITYstarsNY

QUALITYstarsNY is the state's Quality Rating & Improvement System for early childhood education and care. Administered by the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, housed within the City University of New York (CUNY), QUALITYstarsNY serves as a comprehensive framework to assess, support, and improve childcare programs across New York state. The program offers a rating system that encourages childcare providers to continually enhance their practices and enrich the teaching experiences to young children. QUALITYstarsNY partnered with the Cloudsplitter Foundation to integrate the CCEA initiative within its existing framework, to ensure high-performing childcare providers and educators received financial recognition and rewards for their irreplaceable contributions to early childhood development.

QUALITYstarsNY program staff aided in providing follow-up contact information and guidance for our survey design, interview process, and final report writing.



## Abstract

This white paper provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing childcare providers in New York State (NYS) and presents the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) program within QUALITYstarsNY as a proactive solution. The paper begins with a brief landscape analysis highlighting the shortage of available childcare facilities in NYS. It then delves into the problem statement, emphasizing the issues of recruiting, retaining, and providing professional development for childcare providers. The project background section offers insights into the research methodology and survey design. Subsequently, the paper presents policy recommendations based on evidence gathered from surveys and interviews with childcare providers and stakeholders. Major findings are summarized with professional-quality graphics to enhance comprehension and serve as a resource for future presentations. The paper concludes with a list of references, providing essential source material for decision-makers, policy-makers, and stakeholders.

## Introduction

This paper and the conclusions that follow are the result of a collaboration and partnership between QUALITYstarsNY, New York's Quality Rating and Improvement System for early childhood programs, and the Cloudsplitter Foundation, a private foundation dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Adirondack region of New York State.

Focusing on the childcare 'desert' in the northeastern-most counties of New York state,<sup>1</sup> this partnership set out to test the thesis that cash awards to some of the best educated and lowest paid professionals in the U.S., childcare educators, could improve their recruiting, retention, and skills. With funding from the Cloudsplitter Foundation and professional direction and support from QUALITYstarsNY, a three-year experiment was launched resulting in this study, carried out by Adirondack Research, a professional research organization located in the study area.

As the subsequent sections of this paper will illustrate, this program presents a cost-effective and high-impact solution to address the critical shortage of quality childcare programs statewide. Spearheaded by the QUALITYstarsNY and Cloudsplitter Foundation partnership, this initiative offers immediate scalability, seamlessly integrating with existing structures while eliminating the necessity for additional bureaucratic layers and reducing administrative

complexities.<sup>Endnote: \*</sup> The forthcoming discussion will delve into the award program's remarkable capacity to enhance childcare by boosting recruitment, retention, and skill development among childcare providers, all while contributing to the modest incomes of early childhood educators.<sup>2</sup>

The impetus for this study originated from the research findings of The Carolina Abecedarian Project<sup>3</sup>,<sup>Endnote: †</sup> and the Perry Preschool Study.<sup>4</sup>,<sup>Endnote: ‡</sup> These studies unequivocally affirm the exceptional significance of the first five years in a person's life. It is during this formative period that the groundwork for a lifetime of learning, growth, and development is meticulously laid. As children take their inaugural steps, articulate their initial words, and embark on their exploratory journey with unquenchable curiosity, they are, in essence, crafting the inaugural chapters of their life narratives.

Multiple studies have shown that helping infants and toddlers with their acquisition of socialization and verbalization skills leads to life-long improvements, not just in school performance, but also in reduced alcoholism, drug use, incarceration, divorce, and poor life-time earnings.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, investing in early child development like high quality preschools, has not only proven to provide cognitive and socio-

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1 (Childcare Coordinating Council of the North Country, 2019)

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2 (McLean et al., 2020)

3 (Campbell & Ramey, 1991; Ramey, 1974)

4 (Schweinhart & Weikert, 1981)

5 (Heckman et al, 2020; Campbell et al, 2019)

emotional gains in the short-term,<sup>6</sup> but has been proven to provide benefits and returns throughout the course of an individual's life.<sup>7</sup> Realizing the profound significance of these early years, we find ourselves at the heart of a transformative opportunity to shape not just individual destinies but the very fabric of our society. In this White Paper, we delve into the Childcare Excellence Award program, a vehicle to establish a path toward a brighter future for our children and our communities.

Across the landscape of early childhood education, the journey is marked by complexities and disparities.<sup>8</sup> The availability and accessibility of quality childcare vary widely, often influenced by geographic location, economic factors, and sociodemographic considerations. Families in underserved and marginalized communities face unique challenges in accessing the high-quality care that every child deserves.<sup>9</sup> As we navigate this terrain, we come face to face with the stark reality: not all children have equitable access to the opportunities that lay the groundwork for success in school and in life.<sup>10</sup>

In response to this pressing challenge, the Childcare Excellence Award emerges as a catalyst for progress and change. These awards, a series of \$2,000 incentives disbursed to childcare providers as they increase their scores earned through the QUALITYstarsNY five-Star rating and improvement process, carries a profound mission—to elevate the quality of education accessible to all children. Simultaneously, it strives to attract, recruit, retain, and empower the very best teachers our children can have. As we delve deeper into the significance of this award, we unveil a promising path towards a more inclusive and equitable future for early childhood education.

## Problem Statement: Shaping a Brighter Future for Our Children

The state's childcare landscape is marked by a shortage of accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare facilities.<sup>11</sup> The shortage is particularly acute in rural and underserved areas, often leaving parents

with limited childcare options.<sup>12</sup> This issue not only affects families but also has a profound impact on the workforce, as parents, especially mothers, are forced to make career sacrifices or leave the workforce entirely due to a lack of reliable childcare.<sup>13</sup>

Childcare providers in NYS encounter hurdles and face significant challenges in recruitment, retention, and providing employees the skills they need to thrive in their capacities.<sup>14</sup> The demanding nature of the profession, coupled with relatively low wages and limited professional development opportunities, poses challenges in attracting and retaining dedicated professionals. These issues collectively contribute to a childcare workforce that is stretched thin, impacting the quality of care provided to children.<sup>15</sup>

New York State has a diverse landscape and a unique set of communities and regions. Although the state comprises this diversity of communities—ranging from large urban centers to low population rural regions, all of these communities across the state have one thing in common—the **scarcity of high-quality childcare programs**.<sup>16</sup>

Our study focuses on northern New York and the Adirondack Region. This region, characterized by low population levels and vast rural expanses, is representative of much of rural New York in that it faces significant challenges in providing accessible and affordable childcare services. This predicament ultimately impacts the quality of care provided to children. One quick analysis of the landscape illustrates the dearth of available childcare programs in the Adirondack Region.<sup>17</sup> While this region is tackling these challenges, we understand that it is not unlike much of the rest of the state. The inadequate resource of high-quality childcare across the state highlights the profound impacts on families, local economies, and the overall well-being of communities.<sup>18</sup>

## CHILDCARE CHALLENGES ACROSS THE STATE:

The challenge for promoting a statewide system of high-quality childcare is arguably not different from the challenges facing upstate New York. Across

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6 (Peisner et al., 2003)

7 (Heckman, 2023)

8 (Becker, 2010; Mattox et al., 2014)

9 (Johnson-Staub, 2017)

10 (Hillemeier et al., 2013)

11 (Hochul, 2023)

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12 (Sipple et al., 2020)

13 (Schwartz, 1996; Blau et al., 1988)

14 (Hallahan, 2020)

15 (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2016)

16 (Hochul, 2023; Alliance for Quality Education & Brisport, 2021; Feiereisel, 2020)

17 (Childcare Coordinating Council of the North Country, 2019)

18 (Stevens, 2018)

the state, the demand for childcare far exceeds the supply, resulting in limited or no access to quality, affordable childcare for families.<sup>19</sup> While the Adirondack Region has some unique limitations and hurdles, many of these are shared statewide. Some of the key contributing factors include:

**1. Limited Economic Resources:** Many families have limited financial resources,<sup>Endnote: §</sup> making it challenging to afford high-quality childcare services, even if they were more readily available. This economic constraint further exacerbates access limitations to childcare.

**2. Workforce Implications:** The absence of accessible childcare options impacts the workforce, with parents, particularly mothers, often forced to make career sacrifices or forgo employment altogether. This has a ripple effect on the economy and workforce productivity.<sup>20</sup>

#### IMPACT ON FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES:

Due to the paucity of available childcare facilities, communities across the state face profound repercussions for families and communities:

**1. Economic Strain:** Parents face significant economic challenges when they must choose between paying for childcare, sometimes at high costs due to the limited supply, and meeting other essential expenses.<sup>21</sup>

**2. Reduced Workforce Participation:** The lack of childcare options hinders workforce participation, particularly among parents with young children, limiting opportunities for career advancement and economic stability.

**3. Community Vibrancy:** Childcare centers can be vibrant cornerstones of community social life, economic stability, and community stability. Childcare centers also have the ability to attract residents to areas, thereby enhancing economic development and growth.<sup>22</sup>

## Background

### The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA)

Amidst the challenges posed by childcare providers, the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) Program,

established by the Cloudsplitter Foundation in partnership with QUALITYstarsNY, emerges as a potential catalyst for change. This program is designed to recognize and incentivize excellence among early childhood professionals working within childcare programs enrolled in QUALITYstarsNY. It offers financial incentives in the form of up to five \$2,000 personal awards to individuals who meet specific quality improvement milestones.

By fostering excellence among childcare providers and encouraging them to enhance the quality of care they offer, the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) program presents a promising solution to childcare limitations in the Adirondack Region, and herein we argue, across the state. This landscape analysis delves into the critical issues surrounding childcare accessibility in the region while highlighting the potential of the CCEA program to create positive change—benefiting families, strengthening the workforce, and supporting the overall well-being of our communities—across the state.

## Methods

Adirondack Research conducted a comprehensive survey to evaluate the impact of the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) program among its recipients. The program was designed and implemented to enhance caregiver recruitment, retention, and participation in QUALITYstarsNY. Notably, since the program's inception in 2021, the Cloudsplitter Foundation has disbursed a total of 193 awards to recipients who have actively contributed to the advancement of their respective facilities and childcare centers within the QUALITYstarsNY framework.

### Surveyed Population

We contacted 25 facilities that received CCEAs, with 22 agreeing to participate. Three facilities were inaccessible due to permanent closure. Importantly, all currently operating facilities were represented in the research, resulting in a 100% inclusion rate. We interviewed both CCEA recipients (105) and non-recipients (48) across these 22 facilities as well as for one additional facility that joined QUALITYstarsNY since 2021 when the CCEA program was established, for a total of 23 facilities surveyed.

To facilitate this survey, Adirondack Research collaborated closely with QUALITYstarsNY and The Cloud-

19 (Childcare Coordinating Council of the North Country, 2019)

20 (Gibbs, 2022)

21 (Malik, 2019)

22 (Haynes et al., 2020)



splitter Foundation to identify and establish contact with the facilities that had previously received the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA). Communication with these facilities was initiated through various means, including email, phone, and Facebook messages.

*“It encouraged me to do better, that’s when I took an interest and became a lead teacher.”*

Upon successful engagement with facility administrators, our research team sought to interview all personnel associated with the participating facilities, encompassing both CCEA recipients and those who did not receive the award. Prior to commencing the survey process, each participant was presented verbally with a pre-written research preamble highlighting fundamental aspects of informed consent consistent with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Furthermore, the preamble expounded upon the rationale supporting the research study (Appendix 3).

To ensure the integrity and confidentiality of responses, survey forms did not record identifiable information, and responses were only linked to participant names and locations in a separate file using an identification number. All completed surveys have been securely archived, accessible exclusively to the Adirondack Research team.

The survey was administered in-person and encompassed visits to 23 distinct locations within the Adirondack and upstate NY region. Our comprehensive survey effort embraced both CCEA recipients (105 respondents) and non-recipients (48 respondents). The 23 facilities ranged less than 5 employees to our largest interviewed facility of over 30 employees. Communities range from the largest population center of Plattsburgh, NY with a population of roughly 20,000 people to small communities with under 3,000 people. We also interviewed one facility in the Akwesasne Mohawk reservation.

### Survey Design

Respondents were surveyed on 13 multiple-choice and Likert scale questions, supplemented by two open-ended questions to collect a more personal perspective from the respondents. Administrators were presented with eight additional multiple-choice

and Likert scale questions specific to owners and administrators. During the survey administration, the surveyor articulated the questions audibly, with responses documented by the surveyor. In addition to capturing numerical responses, the surveyor recorded nuanced remarks associated with each

question. This approach allowed for further insights and interpretations to emerge.

Out of the 153 participants in the survey, 35 held administrative roles within their respective facilities. Following each interview, memos were compiled to provide context for data analysis.

## Results

The study aimed to assess the impact of the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) program on **teacher recruitment, retention, and participation in QUALITYstarsNY**. Findings are organized based on these three key categories.

### RESULT 1: POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF THE CCEA

When questioned about the CCEA program’s value compared to other incentives and grant initiatives, **96% of both administrators and teachers endorsed the program**, considering it highly worthwhile and, **99% of respondents expressed their desire to continue their engagement with the CCEA program**, indicating a strong intent to progress through QUALITYstarsNY. When we asked if the award monetary level was sufficient with respect to the amount of effort required to engage in continuous quality improvement through participation in QUALITYstarsNY, **88% found the compensation commensurate with their effort**, however, when we asked specifically if they thought a larger monetary award would help them reach higher quality benchmarks more quickly, 84% agreed or strongly agreed.

**What people are saying:** The open-ended questions we recorded underscore the program’s effectiveness once they enroll in QUALITYstarsNY. Multiple administrators mentioned that maintaining higher quality programming with the support of QUALITYstarsNY

is a team effort, and it requires everyone's participation to succeed. The documentation and education required to achieve the highest quality Star Ratings in QUALITYstarsNY makes it difficult for administrators to encourage staff to be engaged and initiate in QUALITYstarsNY. Many administrators have remarked how the award made it easier to motivate and incentivize

thereby cementing their continued engagement in QUALITYstarsNY and in continued employment at the facility. We found that participants appreciate the knowledge and skills gained through this incentive program, and that they gain a sense of ownership and pride once they have accomplished the work associated with being fully engaged with QUALITYstarsNY.

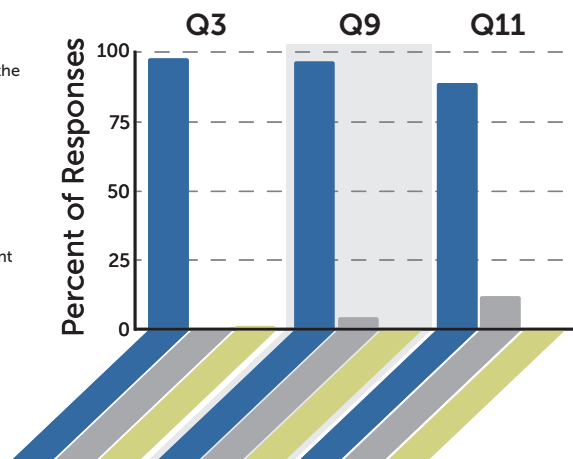
## RESULT 1: POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF THE CCEA PROGRAM

**Question 3:**  
Want to start or continue with the program

**Question 9:**  
Compared to similar programs, the CCEA program was valued

**Question 11:**  
The compensation was sufficient for the amount of effort

Agree or Strongly Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree or Strongly Disagree



One person stated it well by saying "It encouraged me to do better, that's when I took an interest and became a lead teacher." Childcare professionals not only felt that it helped them advance in their own place of work, but it also made them feel a sense of continued motivation to participate in the CCEA program. One person who had received an award stated that "The award made me want to try harder for the next time around [during the rating] to get a higher score."

Another person remarked how the award incentivized her to enroll in QUALITYstarsNY and, because of it, she is now a better educator. "This

the teachers and staff to "do their part" in helping the facility to increase and sustain a high-quality program.

One administrator remarked: "This [award] provides both personal and professional gain and gets that

award has impacted me in the quality of care I provide to the children, and it has impacted how I see little children. There's no such thing as a bad child. [It has helped] me understand the psychology of the child.

*"The award made me want to try harder for the next time around [during the rating] to get a higher score.."*

buy-in [from our staff]. The Administrator went on to say, "The award...helps us accomplish what we [as administrators] want for them. To continue to leave the legacy and ensure that progression is continued when we leave."

## RESULT 2: ENHANCED RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**Eighty-four percent of employees affirmed that the award served as a motivating factor for their endur-**

*"Sometimes I wanted to give up... [the award] made me want to continue"*

The CCEA serves as a powerful incentive to drive initial enrollment into QUALITYstarsNY, as both home childcare providers and administrators concur. Once participants overcome the initial hurdles associated with set-up, the program's value becomes apparent,

**ing commitment to early childhood education.** In contrast, less than 2% disagreed, with the remaining 14% indicating neutrality, attributing their dedication mainly to their profound connection with the children. Notably, **90% strongly agreed or agreed that**

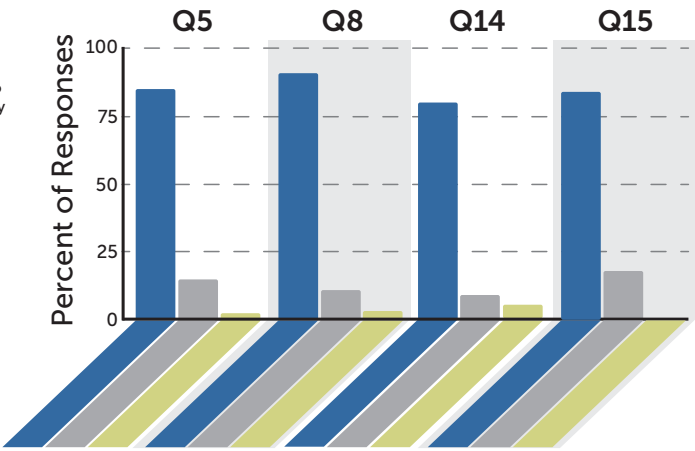
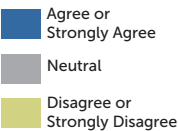
the award played a pivotal role in their decision to remain at their respective facilities. When we polled administrators, **80% recognized the program's significance as an effective recruitment incentive**, and when we asked about retention **83% thought that the program helped retain employees**. Some administrators expressing neutrality on these aspects were unaware of potential additional awards and had not employed the CCEA as an incentive for recruitment and retention, highlighting their excitement upon learning about additional award possibilities.

financial costs. Coming off of [sic] COVID and having a new baby [it helped.]” Another provider, who shoulders an additional burden of caring for her husband remarked, “[The award] helped me because my husband had just had a stroke, and I’m the only provider. This helped me pay the bills. It was very rough. I thought the award was a scam at first. I was like ‘What? Is this for real?’ I was shocked [by] how much it was. Hard work pays off!”

Several noted that their awareness of the award influenced their choice to remain at their facility, illustrating how the program has become a pivotal factor in their career decisions. One childcare provider noted, “It’s really helped me because I don’t make much money, so it helped with added expenses. It’s motivated me to stay. Sometimes I wanted to give up and I would think about the award it would make me continue.” Another childcare provider admitted, “This award motivated me to stay and stick it out.”

**RESULT 2: ENHANCED RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

- Question 5:**  
The program encouraged me to continue a career in childcare
- Question 8:**  
The award amount was ample to motivate me to stay at the facility
- Question 14:**  
Provides worthwhile incentives for recruitment
- Question 15:**  
Provides worthwhile incentives for retention



**What people are saying:** The CCEA’s contribution to reduced financial burden emerged as a recurring theme, enabling employees to forego additional jobs

One administrator confessed, “[This award has been] good to provide the extra award for retention. Others [the employees] see at least you see them

*“It made me feel validated to be in this career choice. I love my job...[but] awards like this motivate me to do more and do better and to engage with the kids and play with them.”*

and concentrate on their roles, thereby enhancing retention. One administrator agreed that the program increased education quality and remarked, “when teachers feel less financial stress, they are able to be better teachers and be more present.”

One person stated, “The award came at a time when everything increased and became astronomically expensive.” Another person noted, “It helped with

and [are] trying to recognize them and compensate them.”

We were told repeatedly that people appreciate being valued. Many remarked this is the first bonus they have ever received, including those who have worked for over 10 years.

“Being in this field for so long, before a couple years



ago, personal recognition never existed. Before it was, 'we are going to force you to go through these hoops and trainings with nothing in return.' Getting the reward was a different type of gratitude for me. It was nice to be recognized for once."

*"I felt compensated and felt motivated to go through the rigor of QUALITYstarsNY. Maintaining everything [through QUALITYstarsNY] felt daunting, so this made it feel worth it..."*

### RESULT 3: INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND SKILL ENHANCEMENT

**Ninety-three percent of respondents acknowledged that the presence of the CCEA incentivized their participation in QUALITYstarsNY, and more importantly, 76% agreed that it expedited their progress on quality improvement, underscoring its positive impact.** When we asked administrators if this program was helpful at increasing motivation among employees to advance professionally, **83% of administrators concurred that the CCEA effectively motivated employee skill development.**

**What people are saying:** Participants reported feeling recognized, appreciated, and valued, fostering greater engagement. One educator remarked, "It's made me feel more proud [sic] in my work. It has encouraged me to keep on reaching a higher level of childcare. When you get paid more, it brings more encouragement." Additionally, another educator said, "I felt compensated and felt motivated to go through the rigor of

pause] but it is nice to finally be compensated. Being seen by someone with means is truly incredible."

One childcare professional stated it well by saying, "It made me feel validated to be in this career choice. I

love my job...[but] awards like this motivate me to do more and do better and to engage with the kids and play with them."

Many educators recognized the training received

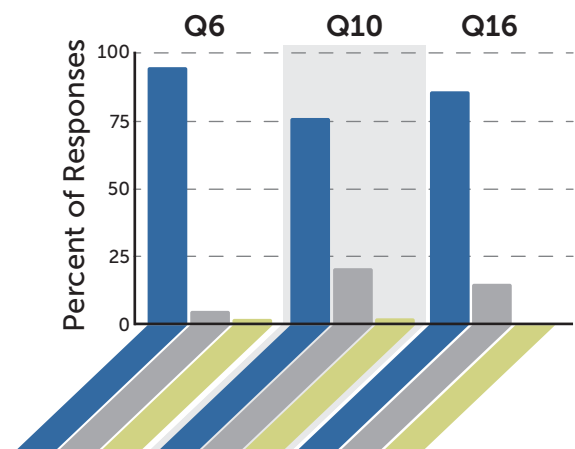
### RESULT 3: INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND SKILL ENHANCEMENT

**Question 6:**  
Incentivised participation in QUALITYstarsNY

**Question 10:**  
Expedited their progress through QUALITYstarsNY

**Question 16:**  
Encouraged employee skill development

Agree or Strongly Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree or Strongly Disagree



through QUALITYstarsNY as an instrument in refining their teaching approaches and acquiring additional licenses and professionalization. One educator remarked, "This award motivated me to finish the

*"It did help pay for classroom supplies, which I needed. I put it toward students' birthdays."*

QUALITYstarsNY. Maintaining everything [through QUALITYstarsNY] felt daunting, so this made it feel worth it. [starts crying] It doesn't happen being seen. I get so much reward from the kids and family, [long

CDA." While another said, "It made me want to continue on with my CDA, to not give up and keep going."

This award provided a newfound sense of accomplishment and recognition which in turn motivated them to excel. Administrators unanimously affirmed that the award contributed to overall facility quality and enhanced their capacity to implement quality improvement initiatives within QUALITYstarsNY, further underlining the program's positive influence. One childcare educator said, "Feeling recognized [impacted me]. Childcare workers are not recognized, and receiving the award makes me feel like, wow! Someone sees me and knows what I'm doing. It makes you feel good. It makes you feel like what you're doing really matters."

Another mentioned the power of this recognition, "Being recognized, that's what it boils down to. Someone bigger than our agency actually recognizes us...We always go unrecognized, we also get taken for granted. Most people think we are just babysitters." Another educator confessed, "It's nice to be recognized in our field. Childcare doesn't have the same level of respect...society doesn't recognize us. It's really hard." This same educator went on to explain that friends have tried to convince her to join the public school system (since she already has the proper certification and education to do so). She also admitted, "I was shocked when I received it. I thought it was so nice to be recognized. [What we're doing] is so important developmentally on a child. I feel I've been overlooked for so long. I've been in this [field] forever and never received something like this. This is the first time I have received an award like this."

Many educators mentioned that they already spent much of their personal funds towards the classroom, and this added financial incentive provided them justification to continue to spend those funds toward the classroom. One educator said, "The \$2000 was nice because I put it towards crafts for the little ones, books for the classroom, and used it to pay bills."

Another confessed, "It did help pay for classroom supplies, which I needed. I put it toward students' birthdays." One educator mentioned how it helped with the overall aesthetic of the classroom, "I like to buy things for my classroom, it was nice to get the little extra to justify this personal spending. I decorate a lot and do a lot outside for my kids, and we are definitely underpaid, so it helped." Another educator who has

signed up for the program, but has not yet received the award simply stated, "most of the award would go to the classroom and things we need."

In summary, the Childcare Excellence Award program emerged as a potent driver of teacher recruitment, retention, and skills improvement. Participants overwhelmingly valued the program, which not only recognized their efforts but also provided tangible incentives for their professional growth and development. Administrators particularly lauded the program's ability to incentivize staff enrollment and ease administrative hurdles, facilitating greater engagement in QUALITYstarsNY's model of continuous quality improvement. Educators valued the program for its ability to ease financial burdens. They also felt recognized for their hard work and achievement which contributed to engagement and progression in career advancement.

## Recommendation for statewide expansion of CCEA

We strongly recommend the statewide expansion of the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) program across New York State (NYS). By replicating the CCEA model statewide, NYS can harness its potential to address critical issues in early childhood education, enhance the quality of childcare services, and support the state's workforce and families.

### Key Takeaways:

**1. Program Scalability:** The CCEA program's scalability has been established through its successful implementation in the Adirondack Region. The \$2,000 incentives, based on established quality improvement milestones, serves as a proven model that can be extended to childcare providers throughout NYS.

**2. Consistency in Quality:** A statewide CCEA program would ensure consistency in recognizing and incentivizing quality improvement across childcare facilities, irrespective of their geographical location. This consistency aligns with the state's commitment to high-quality early childhood education.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> (New York State Education Department, 2023)

**3. Workforce Development:** Expanding the CCEA program would significantly contribute to workforce development. By encouraging ongoing professional development and recognizing excellence, the program will attract and retain skilled childcare providers, positively impacting the quality of care provided to children.

**4. Access to Quality Childcare:** Families across NYS will benefit from increased access to high-quality childcare services. As more childcare providers strive for excellence to attain CCEA recognition and are incentivized to join and stay in the childcare industry, parents will have improved options for their children's early education and care.

**5. Economic Impact:** The expanded program will have a positive economic impact by allowing more parents, particularly mothers, to participate fully in the workforce. This increased workforce participation can lead to enhanced economic stability for families and the state.<sup>24</sup>

**6. Improved Livelihoods for Childcare Educators and Administrators:** Expanding the program has the potential to significantly improve the livelihoods of teachers and administrators in the childcare sector. Often, administrators don't earn significantly more than the staff or childcare educators at the facility, and this award is a valuable financial lifeline, alleviating meager earnings and financial stress.<sup>25</sup> It enables these professionals to focus on their roles without the need for additional jobs to make ends meet. This award serves as both a financial lifeline, and a meaningful expression of appreciation, validating their dedication to early childhood education.<sup>26</sup>

By implementing a consistent and transparent Childcare Excellence Award program, we can create a framework that not only recognizes excellence within the early childhood education sector but also motivates and supports ongoing quality improvement. This consistent program structure will benefit childcare providers, educators, young learners, and their families, fostering a culture of excellence in early childhood education.

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24 (Glynn, 2019)

25 (Coffey, 2022)

26 (Khattar, 2023)

## Lessons Learned:

**1. The CCEA Provides Incentive, but did not reach many Home-Based Providers:** Out of the 25 CCEA awarded facilities, only three were home-based providers. This highlights the challenge of this group's capacity to engage in continuous quality improvement through QUALITYstarsNY due to the existing strain they already experience with, often single-handedly, running their business and caring for children in their home.

**2. Clarity and Consistency in Award Disbursement:** Survey responses show strong support for the program; however, a recurring theme is the lack of clarity among administrators and educators regarding the award process and its existence. Expanding the awards program will require greater clarity, potentially through a tiered award system that provides stronger incentives as participants advance.

**3. Continuing Achievement in the Context of QUALITYstarsNY Progression:** As childcare providers progress through QUALITYstarsNY and attain higher ratings, they often have to look toward more challenging and longer-term goals to continue to increase their quality scores. This observation may warrant additional examination of award levels once a high-quality Star Rating of 4-5 Stars has been achieved.

## Conclusion

The considerations presented here illuminate the profound impact of early childhood investments on economic development in New York State.<sup>27</sup> These investments are not mere expenses; but they represent a strategic allocation of resources to nurture human capabilities.<sup>28</sup> These investments will empower our children to lead lives filled with valuable opportunities, ultimately enhancing the state's human capital and future workforce. This will in turn pave the way for a more skilled and prosperous society.

Heckman (2020)<sup>29</sup>, reinforces the paramount importance of early investment in a child's life, revealing that the highest return on investment materializes

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27 (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003)

28 (Sen & Nussbaum, 1993)

29 (Heckman, 2020)



when resources are channeled into early childhood development. By investing in these formative years, we possess the potential to cultivate cognitive and socio-emotional skills, thereby establishing a robust foundation for future triumphs. Consequently, this paradigm shift can have a transformative impact on New York State's economic development by fostering a more capable and competitive workforce.

The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) program, with its proven record of success in the Adirondack Region, is more than just a recognition and incentive initiative; it's a powerful instrument of change for early childhood education, as well as an economic development engine in New York State (NYS). As this white paper has demonstrated, the program's scalability, impact on quality improvement, and investment in the childcare workforce make it an essential tool for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by childcare providers and families across NYS.

With nearly half a million dollars invested in rewarding and incentivizing nearly 200 individuals at over 20 facilities in Franklin, Essex, and Clinton Counties, the CCEA program stands as a testament to what is possible when we prioritize excellence in early childhood education. By expanding this program statewide, NYS can unlock its full potential and drive transformative change.

The significance of this expansion cannot be overstated. It offers a unique opportunity to foster excellence and fair compensation among childcare providers, ensuring that every child in NYS receives the highest quality early education and care by coupling compensation support with the QUALITYstarsNY model. It empowers families with access to reliable and affordable childcare, enabling parents to fully participate in the workforce and provide a stable future for their children.

The transformation of the pilot program in the Adirondacks into a comprehensive statewide initiative need not entail the introduction of supplementary bureaucratic complexities or substantial financial investments. The existing infrastructure of the QUALITYstarsNY program, overseen by the City University of New York (CUNY), stands as a viable resource and partner for the seamless extension of this initiative across the entire state. Moreover, the existing processes for dispensing the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA), presently under the

purview of the Cloudsplitter Foundation, can be readily transitioned to the state administration. In essence, this program stands as "shovel ready," readily available for immediate statewide expansion with the necessary NYS investment.

As we look ahead, the statewide implementation of the CCEA program aligns with NYS's commitment to fostering a vibrant, equitable, and economically robust community. It is an investment in our children, our workforce, and our future. The success stories, empirical evidence, and policy recommendations presented in this white paper serve as a compelling case for action.

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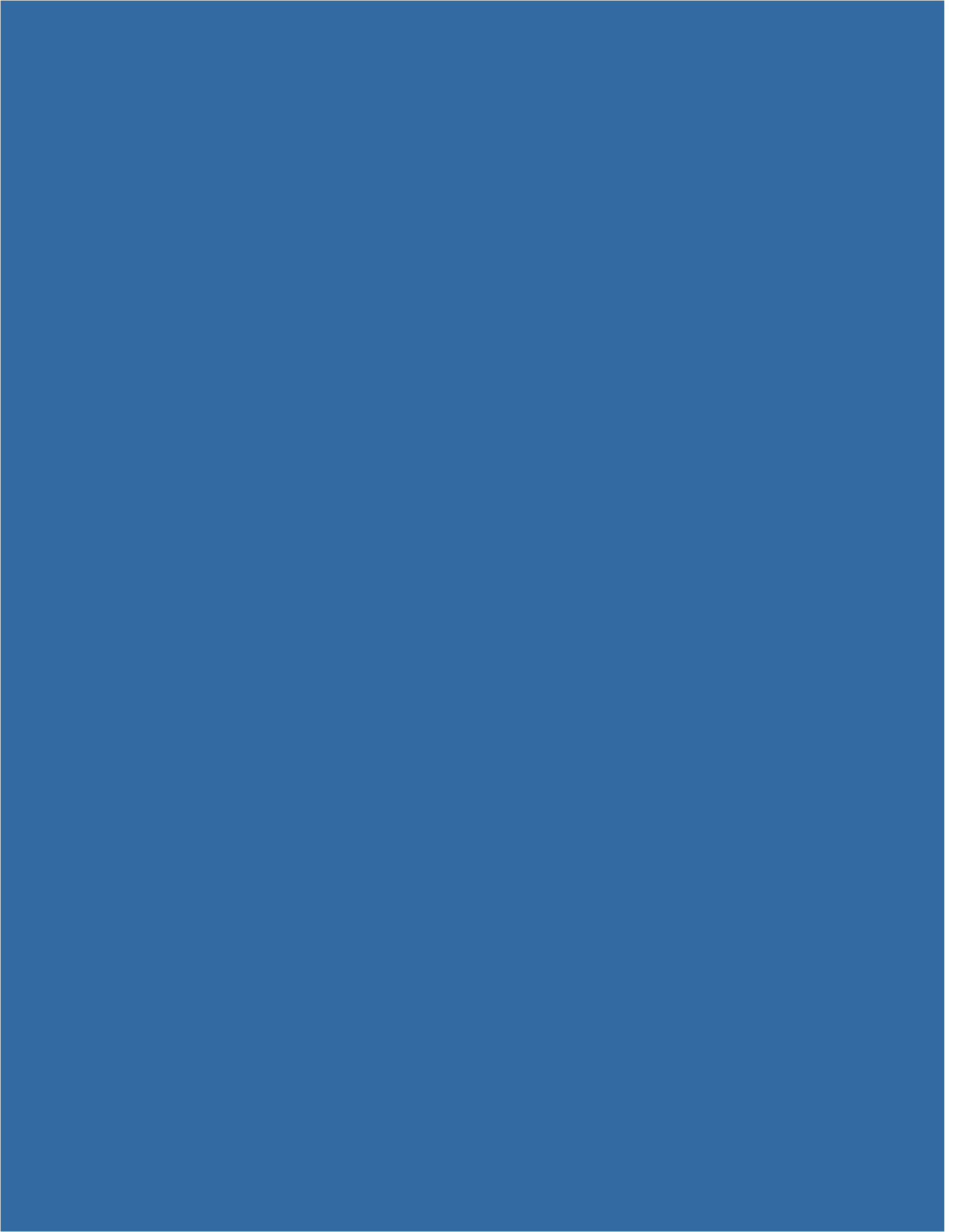
## Endnotes

\* Within the Adirondack Region, we have the following public sector organizations that assisted in the administrative oversight of the Childcare Excellence Awards (CCEA) Program. These organizations include, but are not limited to: The Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance <https://www.adirondackbt3.org/>, Childcare Coordinating Councils of the North Country <https://www.cccnc.org/>, Adirondack Community Action Programs <https://www.acapinc.org/>. Their assistance provided the needed oversight and accountability necessary to complete such a large project.

† The Carolina Abecedarian Project is a longitudinal research study initiated in the 1970s through the University of North Carolina. Led by researchers Frances Campbell and Craig Ramey, the project focused on early childhood education and intervention strategies, specifically targeting children from low-income families. The study implemented a comprehensive and high-quality early childhood education program, providing cognitive and social stimulation to participants from infancy through school entry. The goal was to examine the long-term effects of such interventions on cognitive development, academic achievement, and life outcomes. The project's findings have contributed significantly to understanding the importance of early childhood education in shaping lifelong trajectories, subsequent studies have been conducted building upon the research from this study.

‡ The Perry Preschool Project was similarly conducted in the 1960s in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This was a randomized control study. Led by researchers David Weikart and Lawrence Schweinhart, the project aimed to assess the long-term effects of a high-quality preschool program on the cognitive and social development of disadvantaged African American children. The experimental group received a comprehensive preschool curriculum, while the control group did not. The study demonstrated positive outcomes, indicating that children who participated in the preschool program exhibited higher IQ scores, improved academic performance, and a reduced likelihood of involvement in criminal activities later in life. The Perry Preschool Project provided empirical evidence for the importance of quality early intervention in shaping positive life outcomes for at-risk children.

§ Fourteen percent of the population in our study area (Franklin, Essex, and Clinton Counties) are below the poverty level, and an additional 27% are below ALICE (Assets Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – what used to be called the "working poor") level. This information can be found at <https://www.unitedforalice.org/new-york-and-alice-in-the-crosscurrents>, COVID and financial hardship in the Adirondack Region: <https://www.unitedwayadk.org/alice>.





Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Adirondack Research

73 Church Street, Suite 2  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983



Adirondack Research has been approached by The Cloudsplitter Foundation to create a survey with the objective of measuring the impact of the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) among its current recipients. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) is a monetary award that is disbursed/distributed to those affiliated within an early learning education setting, and it is awarded to those who have participated/going to participate in the QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY) program.

Surveyor Name:

Ashley Milne

Project Name:

CCEA Survey

Funding Agency:

Cloudsplitter Foundation

Date:

## **Section 1: General Information – to be filled out by EVERYONE**

### **1. How many years have you been employed in early childhood education?**

*More info: This includes working for a business or home childcare facility.*

- 
- ☐ A) Less than a year
  - ☐ B) 1-2 years
  - ☐ C) 2-5 years
  - ☐ D) 5-10 years
  - ☐ E) Over 10 years

### **2. Have you received a monetary award through the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA)?**

- 
- ☐ A) Yes
  - ☐ B) No

### **3. Which one best describes your level of involvement in the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) Program?**

- 
- ☐ A) I am NOT involved in the CCEA Program and do NOT wish to participate in the CCEA Program.
  - ☐ B) I have NOT yet started the CCEA Program, but I DO want to participate in the CCEA Program.
  - ☐ C) I have started the CCEA Program and do NOT wish to continue in the CCEA Program.
  - ☐ D) I have started the CCEA Program, and I DO wish to continue in the CCEA Program.

## **Section 2: Program Survey – to be filled out by EVERYONE**

*More info: For those who are NOT administrators, please answer Section 2 only. For those who are administrators, please answer Section 2 and 3.*

### **4. To what extent are you familiar with the Childcare Excellence Awards (CCEA) Program?**

- 
- ☐ (A) Not at all Familiar      ☐ (B) Somewhat Familiar      ☐ (C) Very Familiar

### **5. To what extent do you agree that the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) Program has encouraged you to continue your career in early childhood education?**

- 
- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree      ☐ (B) Disagree      ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree      ☐ (D) Agree      ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

### **6. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) Program incentivizes me to participate fully in quality improvement efforts as a participant in QUALITYstarsNY.**

- 
- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree      ☐ (B) Disagree      ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree      ☐ (D) Agree      ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

### **7. If you have received an initial award: The monetary award motivated me to seek an additional Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA).**

- 
- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree      ☐ (B) Disagree      ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree      ☐ (D) Agree      ☐ (E) Strongly Agree      ☐ (F) Not Applicable

### **8. If you advanced and assisted the childcare center/home to receive an additional Star Rating or to increase in points: The monetary award is sufficient to motivate me to continue to remain at the facility.**

- 
- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree      ☐ (B) Disagree      ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree      ☐ (D) Agree      ☐ (E) Strongly Agree      ☐ (F) Not Applicable



**9. Compared to other incentive programs: I value the CCEA Program and think others in my field would also find it to be of value.**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**10. The monetary awards given by the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) motivated me to move *more quickly* through the QUALITYstarsNY program.**

*More Info: \*Please note that this also applies if you have not yet received your first award.*

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**11. The CCEA compensation was sufficient for the time and effort needed to fully engage with QUALITYstarsNY**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**12. Would a larger award amount encourage you and your team to work towards increasing the Star Rating at a faster pace (to re-rate in 18 months instead of 36 months)?**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**13. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) has increased my job satisfaction.**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

### Section 3: Administrators/Stakeholders ONLY

*More info: For those who are administrators, please answer this section.*

**14. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) provides worthwhile incentives for employee recruitment.**

---

- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**15. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) provides effective incentives for employee retention.**

---

- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**16. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) provides effective incentives for employee skills improvement.**

---

- ☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**17. Does participating in the CCEA contribute to the overall quality of the facility?**

---

- ☐ A) Yes  
☐ B) No

**18. Does the CCEA Program support your quality improvement efforts as a participant of QUALITYstarsNY.**

---

- ☐ A) Yes  
☐ B) No

**19. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) provides effective incentives for me as an administrator/stakeholder to continue my involvement with QUALITYstarsNY.**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) enhances education quality?**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

**21. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) Program provides effective incentives for increasing education quality.**

---

☐ (A) Strongly disagree    ☐ (B) Disagree    ☐ (C) Neither disagree nor agree    ☐ (D) Agree    ☐ (E) Strongly Agree

[Open Ended Questions – to be asked to providers and/or staff while at the Childcare Facility](#)

**22. What has impacted you the most personally and professionally from the CCEA?**

**23. Have there been any challenges associated with the CCEA? If so, please explain.**

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is valued and very much appreciated!

## Appendix 2: Data

The following are the compiled data from the administered surveys. Sums of answers to the 21 Likert and yes/no questions are coded to the questionnaire. See Appendix 1 to see the questions and answer key.

| Keyed answers: See Survey Form |     |    |    |     |    |    |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|
| Question                       | A   | B  | C  | D   | E  | F  |
| 1                              | 13  | 21 | 30 | 29  | 60 |    |
| 2                              | 105 | 48 |    |     |    |    |
| 3                              | 1   | 29 | 2  | 121 |    |    |
| 4                              | 39  | 98 | 16 |     |    |    |
| 5                              |     | 2  | 22 | 72  | 57 |    |
| 6                              |     | 3  | 8  | 67  | 75 |    |
| 7                              |     | 2  | 23 | 30  | 49 | 49 |
| 8                              |     | 3  | 12 | 72  | 61 | 5  |
| 9                              |     |    | 5  | 53  | 95 |    |
| 10                             |     | 3  | 33 | 50  | 67 |    |
| 11                             |     |    | 18 | 73  | 62 |    |
| 12                             |     | 5  | 20 | 53  | 75 |    |
| 13                             |     | 1  | 35 | 63  | 54 |    |
| 14                             | 1   | 1  | 5  | 15  | 13 |    |
| 15                             |     |    | 6  | 16  | 13 |    |
| 16                             |     |    | 5  | 19  | 11 |    |
| 17                             | 35  |    |    |     |    |    |
| 18                             | 35  |    |    |     |    |    |
| 19                             |     |    | 1  | 14  | 20 |    |
| 20                             |     |    | 2  | 14  | 18 |    |
| 21                             |     |    | 1  | 13  | 21 |    |



## Appendix 3: Preamble

The following Preamble was delivered to participants verbally before starting each interview. The text below was used to guide the researcher, however the exact text was not read verbatim. Rather, the context was conveyed to the best of the interviewer's ability.

### CONSENT

Before we begin the survey, I wanted to briefly go over the following with you. You are being asked to take part in a research study by Adirondack Research. Adirondack Research has been approached by The Cloudsplitter Foundation to create a survey with the objective of measuring the impact of the Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) among its current recipients. The Childcare Excellence Award (CCEA) is a monetary award that is disbursed/distributed to those affiliated within an early learning education setting, and it is awarded to those who have participated/going to participate in the QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY) program.

You do not have to participate in the study, answer all of the questions in the study, and may refuse to continue to participate at any point during this interview. Though your responses will greatly enhance the validity of the study and thereby helpful in advocating for your cause, you can volunteer whatever information you choose to provide. There will be no penalty for not answering all the questions.

**Notes:** *If interviewing a provider, ask what they know about the Childcare Excellence Award. If they do not seem to know what we are talking about, explain that it is the \$2000 bonus that they received in the mail for demonstrating a commitment to childcare excellence and for helping your facility to maintain QUALITYstars.*

### SURVEY OVERVIEW

We have drafted a survey of 10 Likert scale questions. We will be recording the answers, but have provided a copy for you to follow along as we read the questions. Please feel free to answer and provide additional information/input as we answer the questions. At the end of the survey, we have two open-ended questions to gather your overall feelings toward the program. We will leave this survey for you to reference later. Feel free to share this the survey with your colleagues, especially those who were unable to attend the interview. We will ultimately be using this information to draft and create a White Paper for the State of New York to assist in policy development and policy making. Your answers will be kept confidential and only our research team will be reviewing the answers.

### HOW THE SURVEY ANSWERS ARE BEING USED

We are here to assess the impact of the award, and therefore here to advocate for you and the childcare industry. The risks associated with this study are minimal and should pose no threat to your health, however, there may be risks that are unforeseeable. There is no cost to you as the participant to participate in the survey. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, we will ask for your name, to cross it off a master list and not include you in the research/study.

**Notes:** *If the interviewee brings up the survey numbering on the page, indicate that the numbers will be used for our record keeping/data management by stating that "These numbers will be disposed of once we have gathered all the surveys together. Only my team will see this survey".*





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