



PRE-K OUR WAY

Prepared for school, ready for success.

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PRE-K OUR WAY NEWS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER **JANUARY 2017**



As we reach the last day of January, Pre-K Our Way has been somewhat quiet (publicly) but busy planning an especially robust next several months of 2017! Before leaving January, we applaud the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce's support for pre-k expansion, the continued legislative priority for pre-k, and multiple NJ and national reports and articles on affordability for early childhood education—and registration for March 21 and 23 Community Communication meetings is open!

STATE CHAMBER SUPPORTS PRE-K EXPANSION

"...Access to full-day pre-k is essential to our current workforce—the working parents of New Jersey's 3- and 4-year-olds," said Amy B. Mansue, chair of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors. Tom Bracken, state chamber president and CEO, continued: "**The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce's goals are to create jobs and foster a New Jersey that is more competitive and business friendly. Pre-k expansion is important to those goals....**". Pre-K Our Way applauds the state chamber and thanks them for their leadership. [Read the releases here.](#)

LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS ON SCHOOL FUNDING

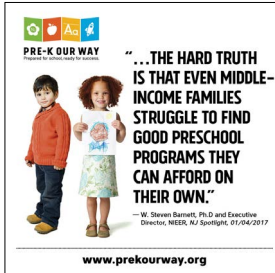
Pre-k expansion continues to rise as a priority in NJ! In the first of as many as 9 legislative hearings, Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto led off the Jan 18 Assembly Education Committee hearing with **support for pre-k, the need to include it in funding, and that pre-k is part of the school funding formula.** Many more hearings are planned for the coming weeks in both the State Senate and Assembly, so stay tuned for additional testimony.

Pre-K Our Way remains focused on pre-k expansion, and on NJ's commitment to equality, quality and improving educational outcomes. NJ leads the nation in providing high-quality pre-k education programs already for over 47,000 children aged 3 and 4. **NJ's existing high-quality pre-k is a uniquely New Jersey success story.** The shame is that it is available in only 35 districts. 2017 and NJ pre-k expansion: The time is NOW! #50000NJKidsarewaiting

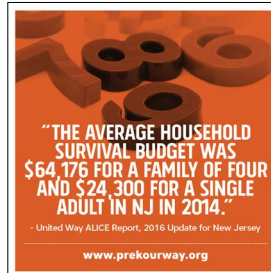
COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION ON MARCH 21 AND 23

Registration is now open! Our next Community Communication meetings are on March 21 in South/Central Jersey and March 23 for North/Central Jersey. **These meetings provide networking opportunities and are strategically timed to share critical information—and strategy—as Pre-K Our Way works with you** to increase the statewide priority of pre-k and drive results: pre-k expansion by a new governor and legislature in 2018. **Be part of the discussion and make your voice heard.** Our November meetings had wait lists, so register early!

FOCUS ON AFFORDABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



Two recent reports delivered companion messages. In early January, the National Institute for Early Education Research ([NIEER](#)) wrote in [NJ Spotlight](#) that **"the hard truth is that even middle-income families struggle to find good preschool programs they can afford on their own."**



Later in the month, the United Way A.L.I.C.E. (Asset Limited, Income Challenged, Employed) report wrote that "ALICE and poverty-level households exist in every racial and ethnic group in New Jersey." Furthermore, "ALICE households live in every county and every town across NJ." [Read more here.](#)

NATIONALLY, BIPARTISAN SUPPORT GROWS FOR PRE-K

Expanding early childhood education is increasingly seen by both Republicans and Democrats as a valuable investment. There is more brain science than ever to suggest investments in the early years pay off. [Read what the Atlantic says](#) in their 2016 Education in Review.

"Money flows from commitment. We spend money on the things we care most about. High-quality preschool is the first step." Check out this [NPR](#) piece. Remember: NJ has high-quality pre-k, but not every 3- and 4-year-old can access it.

The month ended with [POLITICO's Morning Education](#) writing: "A new early childhood initiative at the Bipartisan Policy Center is bringing together two politicians from opposite sides of the aisle: Rick Santorum, a former GOP senator and unabashed conservative, and George Miller, a liberal who was the ranking Democrat on the House education committee until he retired in 2015". In an [opinion piece in USA Today](#), the two men, who together are leading the initiative, write, **"We are convinced that supporting early childhood development is an issue that can unite both political parties."**

FINALLY....

In January, nearby NYC [and Philadelphia](#) registered thousands of children for high-quality, publicly funded pre-k.

Pre-K Our Way is working in your community—and with you—to raise the priority of pre-k and expand pre-k in NJ. Look for that message to be delivered widely and often in the coming months. Together, let's use 2017 to make pre-k expansion happen in NJ!

Have questions? Contact us at info@prekourway.org

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