



**THE CHILD  
CENTER OF NY**

Strengthening Family. Building Community.

**Head Start**  
2023 Annual Report



# ABOUT THE CHILD CENTER OF NY

## OUR MISSION

Strengthen children and families with skills, opportunities, and emotional support to build healthy, successful lives.

## OUR VISION

Disrupt the trajectory of generational poverty.

## WHAT SETS US APART

Holistic, community-level, and peer-driven change models.

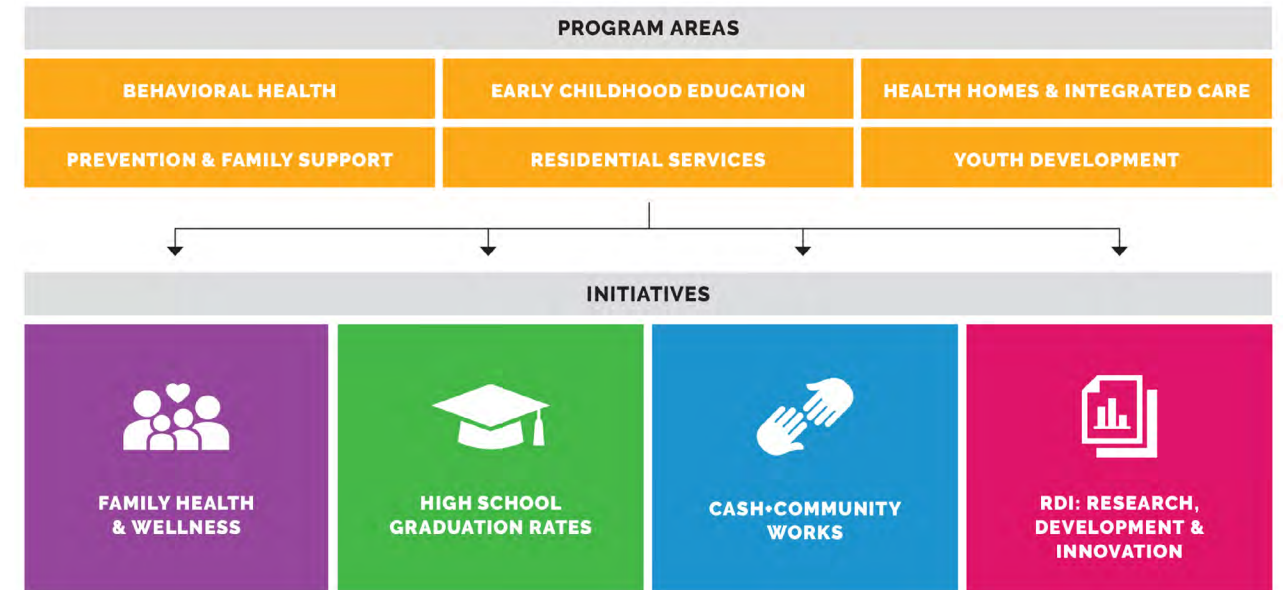
**Since its founding in 1953**, The Child Center of NY has grown from a single children's counseling center to a network of more than 100 programs. Our services range from education to mental health to direct cash investment. This year, we reached **58,334 individuals**, including 2,782 children and parents/other caregivers in our early childhood education programs. Family members of our Head Start and Early Head Start students have access to The Child Center's full suite of services so whole families can rise together.

In addition to providing direct services, The Child Center is also a catalyst for change. As we evolve to meet the emergent challenges of our time, we are focusing our programs on four initiatives to disrupt the trajectory of generational poverty.

The Child Center's Early Head Start and Head Start programs play an integral role in advancing our mission and vision of a world in which no child is born into poverty, no adult is condemned to it, and all children have the tools and support to live healthy, fulfilling lives.



Cover photo: At our Escalera Head Start in Manhattan, a local high schooler worked with our students to create stuffed toy bears. Community engagement is integral to our programming.



### ACROSS THE CHILD CENTER

- 100** PROGRAMS
- 60+** LOCATIONS in all 5 NYC boroughs and Long Island
- 20+** LANGUAGES spoken by staff

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 1** Center-based Early Head Start Program
- 2** Center-based Head Start Programs
- 3** Home-based Early Head Start Programs

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS: WE ARE THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

<p><b>Clients by Ethnicity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82% Hispanic or Latino</li> <li>11% Asian</li> <li>4% Black or African American</li> <li>2% White</li> <li>&lt;1% American Indian or Alaska Native</li> <li>&lt;1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</li> <li>&lt;1% Other</li> </ul>		<p><b>Team Members by Ethnicity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% Hispanic or Latino</li> <li>9% Asian</li> <li>5% Black or African American</li> <li>5% White</li> <li>&lt;1% American Indian or Alaska Native</li> <li>&lt;1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</li> <li>&lt;1% Other</li> </ul>	
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NOTE: Not Hispanic or Latino, unless otherwise noted

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR FOUR INITIATIVES TO DISRUPT THE TRAJECTORY OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY

# WHO WE SERVE

Our early childhood education programs serve children ages 0-5 who are from low-income families and face other barriers to school success.

## ENROLLMENT

**Early Head Start, Home-Based Total Enrollment= 252**

Income below 100% federal poverty line: 62.30%

Public assistance such as TANF, SSI: 25.81%

Foster child status: 0%

Homeless status\*: 3.96%

Over income: 7.93%

Incomes between 100% and 130%: 0%

**Early Head Start, Center-Based Total Enrollment= 8**

Income below 100% federal poverty line: 25%

Public assistance such as TANF, SSI: 62.5%

Foster child status: 0%

Homeless status\*: 12.5%

Over income: 0%

Incomes between 100% and 130%: 0%



**Head Start, Center-Based Total Enrollment= 192**

Income below 100% federal poverty line: 60.42%

Public assistance such as TANF, SSI: 15.10%

Foster child status\*: 0%

Homeless status\*: 16.67%

Over income: 7.81%

Incomes between 100% and 130%: 0%

## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Early Head Start, Center-Based: 12.5%

Early Head Start, Home-Based: 16.25%

Head Start, Center-Based: 30.20%

## DUAL-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Early Head Start, Home-Based: 96.03%

Early Head Start, Center-Based: 50%

Head Start, Center-Based: 85.41%

## HOMELESSNESS\*

Early Head Start, Center-Based: 12.5%

Early Head Start, Home-Based: 59.92%

Head Start, Center-Based: 66.14%



\*While only a small number of enrolled families identify as homeless, many more do not realize they are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which defines homelessness as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. We refer to these families as "doubled up," with overcrowded living spaces and shared or limited access to the necessities of kitchen and bathroom usage.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Child Center's six Head Start and Early Head Start programs enrolled 452 children: 252 in our three home-based Early Head Start programs; 8 in our Early Head Start center-based program; and 192 in our Head Start centers. All programs focus on children's holistic development and support parents and other caregivers as their children's first and most important teacher. Our Corona Head Start program includes an integrated classroom, where we collaborate with the [New York Center for Child Development](#) to support children with special needs. In all programs, children are screened and assessed for developmental delays so we can address them and connect families to services such as Early Intervention or Committee on Preschool Special Education. All programs accept children with special needs.

This school year marked the end of an era. The masks came off! Our early childhood education leadership team met with the Health Services Advisory Committee, consisting of parents, staff, and community members, including a physician from Child Center partner Strong Children Wellness. They recommended discontinuation of the face covering requirement, keeping cleaning policies in place, and ending monitoring.

## CLIENT STORY: JOHANA AND MISAEEL

Our early childhood education teams frequently conduct outreach at local shelters to inform families about our programs. That's how we met Johana and her son Misael.

Johana and her partner Jose traveled on foot with their two children from South America to the United States. Corona Head Start staff met the family at the homeless shelter where they currently live. Johana explained to Senior Program Director Yolanda Vega, LMSW, that she wanted her children to learn to read and write, skills she never acquired.

Johana felt comfortable with Yolanda, who spoke Spanish and understood her family's challenges and dreams, and enrolled her preschool-age son, Misael, in our program. Our team assessed Misael's development in various areas and got Misael evaluated for a speech delay. As he awaits placement, Misael is already flourishing. His class's



From left to right: Back row: Johana and Yolanda. Front row: Misael's brother and Misael

language immersion helped him learn to express himself, and he is much calmer and ready to learn. The Child Center also has helped the family with school supplies and clothing. "I've been working for The Child Center for 22 years," Yolanda says. "I love living and making a difference in the communities I serve!"

# GETTING READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Children begin our programs at different developmental levels and with varied life experiences. Some may be developmentally on track. Some may exhibit developmental delays. Others struggle with trauma, language barriers, and extreme poverty. At our early childhood education centers, we address all these things and prepare children and families to start kindergarten academically, physically, socially, and emotionally prepared to thrive.

**Academic Readiness (pages 8-9):** Our programs teach academic concepts in ways that get children ready and excited for school.

**Physical Health and Wellness (page 10):** Partnerships with health care providers and the integration of healthy living themes promote families' physical health.

**Social-Emotional Development (page 11):** Specially trained team members and access to The Child Center's many behavioral health programs mean we are equipped to support families with social-emotional challenges.

**Parent Education and Engagement (page 12):** Through workshops and a commitment to family engagement, we support parents as primary caregivers so they can foster their children's development on their own.

**As children neared kindergarten age, our preschool classes engaged in targeted kindergarten readiness efforts:**

- The Escalera Head Start universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) teacher took students on a walk to the different neighborhood schools they may attend and took photos of each school to generate discussions in class about what to expect in kindergarten.
- Teachers conducted learning experiences about kindergarten, during which they discussed subjects like where is my new school,

what is a cafeteria, and what will I learn.

- Teachers read books about going to kindergarten and starting a new school, such as [Kindergarten Here I Come!](#) and [Lola Goes to School.](#)
- Family workers met with families who were unfamiliar with the kindergarten application process. They helped parents and caregivers navigate MySchools (the portal through which NYC families apply to public schools), discussed what to expect, and emphasized the importance of attending the school's orientation.



Instilling a love of reading begins in Early Head Start and continues through pre-K to ensure participants are on track with literacy by the time they start kindergarten.

# ACADEMIC READINESS

Child Center early childhood education programs emphasize hands-on, play-based learning that teaches children academic concepts in ways that make sense to them, build confidence, and instill a love of learning.

[Growing Great Kids](#) and [ParentChild+](#) (see below) provide the foundation for our Early Head Start home visiting programs. Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms' stimulating learning environments are grounded in the research-based [Creative Curriculum](#). We measure our impact using [Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) assessments. Children made substantial gains in all domains that indicate kindergarten readiness and healthy development.

## CORONA HEAD START: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

4-year-olds who met or exceeded widely held expectations



## Literacy

Literacy and book awareness are central to routines and activities. Our children develop an enduring love of reading.

- Objects in our centers are labeled in English and students' native languages.



- Team members are trained in teaching dual-language learners.
- Centers include daily readings by teachers. Parents and other guest readers read books that align with learning themes.
- On-site lending libraries are stocked with books for children and families to check out and read together at home.
- Early Head Start home visitors model how to read and talk about books. Home-based families also benefit from the award-winning ParentChild+ (PC+), through which they receive free books and toys and guidance on using them. Re-

search consistently finds that the PC+ model significantly improves parent-child interactions and increases school readiness and later school success. Many of our home visitors were once participating families themselves and are trusted advisors who show parents how they can help their toddler learn and grow.

- Literacy events in 2023 included the national [Read for the Record](#) marathon, sponsored by Jumpstart. Parents visited our classrooms, read to their children in the language of their choosing, and participated in a related art activity—together with children and families around the country.



*Above:* Escalera students visited the American Museum of Natural History, and museum staff visited students at the center. During the visit pictured here, museum staff read *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell and led students in related activities.

## STEM

- The ParentChild+ curriculum provides guide sheets to reinforce the concepts of the week's book and educational toy. Guides are provided in English, Spanish, and Bengali. This [wooden block guide sheet](#), for example, explains how to talk about building blocks with language around colors, size, shapes, and other categories.
- Head Start began using [The Creative Curriculum Study Sequence](#). Study sequences last 4-6 weeks and explore concepts like wheels.
- A sand and water area provides hands-on sensory experiences

and helps children learn new concepts such as math (volume; counting how many cups fill another container; discovering that filling a tall skinny container equals a short wide container) and social skills (taking turns; negotiating; and cooperating to create structures). It is a testament to our educators that parents often resist allowing their children to play in this area because they don't want their children to get dirty, but they come to realize its importance to their learning and development.

## Arts

- New this year: [Studio in a School](#)—an organization through which arts professionals visit schools to direct quality visual arts programs—conducted a 20-week pilot program for our 2-year-old class. An artist visited the center weekly to facilitate the children's exploration of

various media in a way that fosters their creative and intellectual development. Projects included mixing colors to make a new color. Two students' artwork was displayed at the Studio in a School's Young Visions art exhibition at Christie's in Manhattan. Art centers and projects continued to be an integral part of all classrooms.

- Cool Culture cards provide free access to 90+ cultural institutions like museums and zoos.
- Musical instruments teach listening skills, promote the development of auditory discrimination and memory, and grow an appreciation of the art of music.
- Dramatic play centers foster children's imaginations and encourage the exploration of different life experiences.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



From shape sorters to tricycles, equipment and activities lean into children's natural affinity for play and provide opportunities to strengthen fine and gross motor skills. Our team members are trained in recognizing delays and connecting families to services if needed. On-site staff and partnerships further advance children's and families' physical well-being:

- A nurse practitioner guides families in making regular care a part of their lives and monitors children's health files for issues such as unmanaged chronic conditions or missed check-ups. She is also a trusted resource for families' questions and concerns.

- [The Child Center Benefits Access](#) program connects families to benefits like health insurance and SNAP (food stamps).

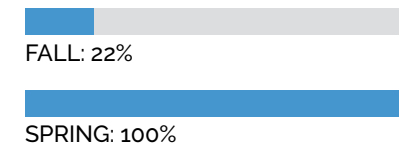
- [Northwell Health](#) holds virtual health workshops on topics of interest to our families, such as healthy eating habits and oral health.

- [Strong Children Wellness](#), a primary health care practice, offers free sick and well visits with board-certified pediatricians via tele-health and at Child Center wellness centers.

**The Child Center started as a children's counseling center. A commitment to mental health remains at the heart of everything we do.**

## CORONA HEAD START: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4-year-olds who met or exceeded widely held expectations



- All educators are trained in [emotionally responsive teaching](#). This year, staff were trained in [mental health first aid for adults](#), too.

- **The Georgetown Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation model** helps caregivers improve their mental wellness and empowers teachers to constructively manage challenging behaviors.

- All centers are staffed with **on-site mental health workers**, and all families are assigned a **family worker**, trained to recognize needs for services. Family workers often share lived experiences with clients, engendering trust.

- The Child Center operates **three family wellness centers**, where

Head Start and Early Head Start families can access therapy and other mental health services. This includes our Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) initiative for families with children ages 0-5. ECMH services are also available on site at our early childhood education centers. Our Corona Head Start center is a New York State Office of Mental Health-licensed satellite where we provide regular therapy and other mental health services, including individual, family, and group counseling, right in the place where children go to school every day. In addition, funding from the [Child Welfare Fund](#) supports mental health services within Early Head Start.

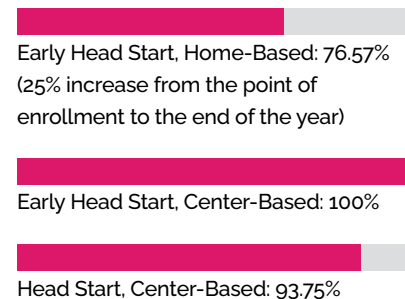
This includes therapy and other services specifically for families with children ages 0-3 years old.

- Families living with domestic violence have access to vital support and resources through the **Domestic and Other Violence Emergencies (DOVE) Program**.
- Mental wellness is integral to our programming in age-appropriate ways, such as by reading books about social-emotional wellness and teaching coping strategies.
- Parent education groups and workshops provide parents and caregivers with parenting tools, skills, and confidence (see next page).

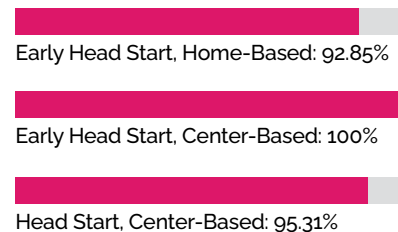


Early childhood education families have access to The Child Center's behavioral health services. Pictured here are Social Worker Taslima Choudhury, LMHC, with clients of our Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative at our Cohen Family Wellness Center, where we also have an Early Head Start program.

## CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED MEDICAL EXAMS \*



## CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED DENTAL EXAMS



\*as of 6/30/24

# PARENT EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

# NEW THIS YEAR

The Child Center recognizes parents as children's first and most important teachers. In addition to fun family events that encourage connections among families, we offer educational classes and workshops. In 2023, these included innovative groups like Attachment Vitamins, a mental health group for parents; financial literacy workshops; and sessions on everyday topics like head lice, food allergies, and 3K orientation. Forward-looking workshops on topics like talking to your children about life facts were also popular. Our most popular offering was ParentCorps, a 14-week parenting program developed by New York University, available in families' home languages. ParentCorps participants commonly note that they feel more empowered to parent in ways that are different from how they were raised, confident in their parenting, and connected to both their children and other families. **Our programs offered classes or workshops on nearly 30 topics in 2023.**

We also enrolled more than 50 former or current early childhood families in Cash+Community Works, a neighborhood-based initiative that provides participants with direct cash investment to advance their personal, career, and community goals. Learn more at <https://childcenterny.org/cashcommunity-works/>.

## CLIENT STORY: LORENA'S FAMILY



From left to right: Candido (dad); 7-year-old Jennifer; 9-year-old Ximena; Lorena; 4-year-old Alexis. Lorena is holding Alexis' certificate of award for puzzle games.

When Lorena's daughters were students at our Escalera early childhood center, Lorena was thrilled by how they became less shy, learned their ABCs, participated in reading, and began kindergarten ready to learn. When her son turned two years old, she enrolled him in Escalera Early Head Start right away. He experienced similar progress to his sisters, who are now excelling in second and third grade.

Lorena learned a lot, too. ParentCorps helped her teach her son to handle emotions constructively, and she joined the parent committee to be involved in her son's education. Lorena recommends Escalera because the whole family learned so much and always felt supported. "The teachers are patient, and you don't have to worry they will judge you," Lorena says. "They just help you be the best parent you can be." [Read Lorena's full story.](#)

## New in Early Childhood Education

- Early childhood education programs worked with The Child Center's new Research, Development & Innovation (RDI) division to develop innovative data dashboards to track program outcomes. These dashboards helped us determine progress toward developmental milestones. Data revealed that the **average improvement across all domains in center-based programs was 51 percent.**
- Child Center early childhood education programs saw a significant increase in asylum-seeking families. More than [2,900 asylum seekers arrived in NYC in one week in 2023, and 107,300 arrived between spring 2022 and summer 2023](#), including thousands of families with children. Our educators are committed and equipped to meet their needs so they are poised to thrive. Learn how in a [blog post](#) by Child Center Early Childhood Education Vice President Tanya Krien.

## New Across The Child Center

- Through our new behavioral health consultation model, The Child Center is lending our expertise in mental health to other organizations that have already built trust in their communities. In this way, we reach more New Yorkers with

mental health services and assist other organizations in adopting a sustainable model of care. Learn more: <https://childcenterny.org/clinical-consultation/>.

- The Child Center launched a campaign to build our new Impact

Collaborative, which will convene the brightest minds across sectors, including mental health, technology, and community work, serving as an incubator for new mental well-being solutions.



Nonprofit organization Soles4Souls provided free new shoes to our students, who enjoyed choosing a pair they liked, assessing the fit, and walking around the classroom in shoes that reflected their own personalities.

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

# SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

	Head Start			Early Head Start		
	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 Expenses	FY 2024 Budget <sup>4</sup>	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 Expenses	FY 2024 Budget
Personnel	1,378,453	1,319,873	1,378,453	1,442,664	1,309,991	1,565,375
Fringe Benefits	412,358	325,557	412,358	491,402	425,670	542,509
Facilities	70,110	78,213	70,110	129,486	132,543	156,368
Travel	2,000	784	2,000	20,150	20,148	20,764
Supplies	99,277	72,654	99,277	43,492	38,528	69,303
COVID-19 Spending <sup>1</sup>	257,484	227,875	-	207,257	138,890	-
Other	100,456	24,410	100,456	203,357	214,996	206,519
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>2,320,138</b>	<b>2,049,366</b>	<b>2,062,654</b>	<b>2,537,808</b>	<b>2,280,766</b>	<b>2,560,838</b>
Indirect Costs	301,618	256,171	257,832	329,915	289,960	325,215
<b>Total Head Start Funded Expenses</b>	<b>2,621,756</b>	<b>2,305,537</b>	<b>2,320,486</b>	<b>2,867,723</b>	<b>2,570,726</b>	<b>2,886,053</b>
In-Kind Expenses <sup>2</sup>	389,398	362,085	409,527	665,117	487,857	679,697
City Tax Levy <sup>3</sup>	850,679	372,729	850,679	53,070	42,015	42,015
Food Program	234,292	189,905	253,670	22,269	14,810	15,346
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>4,096,125</b>	<b>3,230,256</b>	<b>3,834,362</b>	<b>3,608,179</b>	<b>3,115,408</b>	<b>3,623,111</b>

## Public vs. Private Funding

	Head Start	Early Head Start
<b>Total Federal Funding</b>	<b>2,495,442</b>	<b>2,585,536</b>
Public Non-Federal Expenses	372,729	42,015
Private Non-Federal Expenses	362,085	487,857
<b>Total Non-Federal Expenses</b>	<b>734,814</b>	<b>529,872</b>
<b>Total Financial Support</b>	<b>3,230,256</b>	<b>3,115,408</b>

<sup>1</sup>COVID-19 Spending budget was available to spend until March 31, 2023 in FY 2023. Non-Federal share is waived for COVID-19 Spending.  
<sup>2</sup>Due to the COVID-19 crisis and lack of community resources necessary, The Child Center of NY was granted a waiver for the required in-kind in FY 2023.  
<sup>3</sup>City Tax Levy represents funding from the NYC DOE Head Start contracts, which counts toward Non-Federal share. The amount funds direct and indirect costs in running the programs.  
<sup>4</sup>FY 2024 budget for Head Start is based on FY 2023 budget, less the COVID Spending budget, which ended in FY 2023. We are waiting for confirmation from NYC DOE-DECE on the allocation of FY 2024 funding sources.

The Child Center completed an updated Community Needs Assessment in the spring of 2023 to obtain new census data and address the impact of the pandemic. Our programs continue to serve low-income families who struggle with poverty, unemployment, immigration, community violence, overcrowded housing, and inadequate access to social services. Affordable, adequate housing is the primary need for families in all districts, with an increase in children living in shelters. The COVID-19 pan-

demic exacerbated these issues and created new ones: sickness without accessible health care, food insecurity, and children being suddenly left without access to the services they need. All districts will continue to see an increase in available child care services with the expansion of NYC 3K and Pre-K for All; however, the city reports unfilled slots across all boroughs. The landscape of Head Start services throughout New York City has changed with more direct funded programs.



## WHERE YOU CAN FIND US

**Early Childhood Corona**  
 Head Start Center and Early Head Start Home-Based Services  
 34-10 108th Street  
 Corona, NY 11368

**Early Head Start, Astoria**  
 Home-Based Services  
 37-34 29th Street  
 Astoria, NY 11101

**Early Head Start, Woodside**  
 Home-Based Services  
 43-08 52nd Street  
 Woodside, NY 11377

**Escalera Head Start and Early Head Start Center**  
 169 West 87th Street  
 New York, NY 10024

## SENIOR LEADERSHIP

**Traci Donnelly**  
 Chief Executive Officer, The Child Center of NY

**Linda Rodriguez**  
 Senior Vice President, Behavioral Health and Early Childhood

**Tanya Krien**  
 Vice President, Early Childhood Education, Administration and Operations

**Marie Mason**  
 Vice President, Early Childhood Education, Programs and Curriculum

**Pinky Rohira**  
 Parent Policy Council Chairperson



**THE CHILD CENTER OF NY  
OFFERS A HOLISTIC, PEER-  
DRIVEN APPROACH TO LIFTING  
UP UNDER-SERVED YOUTH,  
FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.**

Our mission is to strengthen children and families with skills, opportunities, and emotional support to build healthy, successful lives. We are committed to addressing issues boldly, measuring our results, and scaling up what works.

**Our programs** are located in the communities we serve, with team members who collectively speak two dozen languages and understand the challenges our clients face. Recognizing that children do not grow in isolation, we serve whole families and communities. With the right opportunities and support, children and adults of any background can reach their full potential.



**THE CHILD  
CENTER OF NY**

Strengthening Family. Building Community.

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