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Children's Institute (CI) Publishes 2022-23 Annual Report on Continuous Improvement in Rochester's Pre-K System

Children's Institute, in partnership with the Rochester City School District Office of Early Childhood, has released its 26th annual report of the Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP). The report presents a comprehensive overview of the state of Pre-K education in Rochester. Despite the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's findings highlight the exceptional growth and resilience of the Pre-K system.

The World Health Organization says the COVID-19 pandemic represents the most significant health challenge the world has confronted in over 70 years. The annual RECAP report emphasizes the importance of viewing its evaluation results in the context of these special "pandemic and post-pandemic" conditions. The report spans multiple levels of the Pre-K system, examining individual child development, classroom environments, program quality, family engagement, and system-wide impact.

One of the key highlights is the remarkable resilience of the preschool system, with classroom quality ratings remaining high despite significant teacher turnover and staffing shortages. The findings underscore the dedication and adaptability of educators, who have retained quality classroom environments to support young children's growth.

Ida Perez, Director of Ibero Early Childhood Services, said "As a community-based organization providing universal pre-K (UPK), we are proud of the uninterrupted services we have been able to provide to our raising kindergarteners, helping them stay on track. Our ability to work with children of all stages and ages, helps us meet children where they are, whether it's helping a 3 and sometimes a 4-year-old with potty training or building the social and emotional skills they need to succeed, our teachers work hard."

The report also unveils a significant impact of two years of pre-K (versus one year) on kindergarten readiness, where students who attended pre-K-3 and pre-K-4 demonstrated a 14.7% higher rate of kindergarten readiness compared to those who attended only one year of pre-K. These results underscore the critical role of early education in preparing children for kindergarten.

"We have a remarkably resilient Pre-K system," said Robin Hooper, Executive Director of Early Childhood Education for the Rochester City School District. "The findings in this report underscore the need for two years of Pre-K to ensure kindergarten readiness. We will continue to provide high-quality early education for Rochester's children, and we remain committed to continuous improvement to meet the needs of young children and their families."

"Our Pre-K program is doing very well, with significant developmental progress seen in both Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 children," stated Dr. Carmine Peluso, Superintendent of Schools. "Positive feedback from parents reinforces our dedication to early childhood education and emphasizes the exceptional commitment of our educators. It shows that we are nurturing the future of our students with care and excellence."

Ann Marie White, Ed.D., Executive Director of Children’s Institute, shares that, “Like our community’s children, this year’s report shows how remarkably resilient Rochester’s Pre-K system is – led by community-based family serving organizations as well as Pre-K programs in school buildings. It also shows us that we must keep our eye on program qualities and child outcomes as these move together – and help to address the community level barriers to early learning our children continue to face.”

The information published in this report will inform practices to improve Rochester’s Pre-K system to support young children. The report offers several recommendations for moving forward to strengthen Rochester’s Pre-K programs, including a focus on improving kindergarten readiness and children’s social and emotional health.

The [full 78-page report](#) is available on the Children’s Institute website.

About RECAP:

The Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership was formed to evaluate and continuously improve Rochester’s Pre-K system. RECAP has been instrumental in documenting and contributing to the long-term continuous improvement of Pre-K that was established and continues to evolve in Rochester, New York. Through RECAP, Rochester has been able to realize a sustained, high-performing Pre-K system.

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