Annual Forum October 7, 2004
PK - 3: A Strategy to End the Need for Social Promotion and Improve Academic Achievement

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Question & Answer with Audience

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Question: What Vision for Early Education Is Needed?

Ruby, I want to bring you back into this discussion because, as I've listened to the presentations and thought about this issue, a word pops into my head: vision. Particularly when you hear Leonard talk about what he's doing at his school. It seems to me, in all of the presentations, that there has been a vision for what needs to be done.

I wonder, from your perspective as someone with her hand on the pulse of these issues and aware of the national basis for opinions, what kind of early education vision does there need to be in our country?

RUBY TAKANISHI: Well, I'm sort of a history buff, and I like to say that at the turn of the century we created the American high school. That was also a period of immigration and industrial development and so forth. I like to think that at the turn of the 21st century we will recreate the first level of public education, one that begins with children at age three. I mean, I would really like them to begin earlier. But let's just be pragmatic about it. Starting at three and four with PK and integrating it with full day kindergarten and then integrating both of them with elementary school.

You know, I really do think that our current so-called K through 12 education system is simply anachronistic and out of date. I mean, does it fit with what we know from all the wonderful research about children's development and the conditions that help them to be great learners and so forth? Does it fit with our changing social conditions? Does it fit with the information we know that shows

that the United States is far behind not only the Scandinavian and the western European countries, but countries throughout the world including Asia and Africa for that matter?

While the United States is a leading economy and democracy, we're still probably in the middle of most countries in terms of our provision of universally accessible early childhood programs beginning at age three or four. There are countries that do worse than we do, but there are also a whole bunch of countries throughout the world, including Latin American, where they're implementing early childhood programs for all children to a greater extent than we are in the U.S.

So, I think that the vision is that we need to rethink when publicly supported education begins in the United States. And I think that's what the board of the Foundation for Child Development is trying to put forward.

RACHEL JONES: Does the vision have to come from the ground up? From the community? From parents? Or can it be sort of visited on people from the top down?

RUBY TAKANISHI: I really want to emphasize what Dick said. I've seen a number of polls, such as the polls that drove the Florida ballot initiative, the current polls by the public education network, and the polls that have been done by the Massachusetts Early Childhood Education for All campaign. All of these polling data, in the last five years or so, would indicate that anywhere in excess of 60 percent of the individuals who are polled are highly supportive of publicly supported early education for their children.

So I think we really need to take into account that the voters and parents in polled are really very supportive, and what we really need is to have the kind of leadership by governors that Dick is talking about.

I'd also really like to underscore another point that Dick made. I agree with Dick that the K through 12 education establishment may be one of our prime stakeholders that we really have to convince. And you would think again that it would be common sense and a no-brainer that these educators have a stake in having incoming children who were ready to learn or who were easier to teach. But that doesn't seem to be the case. So I agree that targeting the primary stakeholders to effect change is very important.

Question: How Do We Evaluate Academic Achievement in Young Children?

RACHEL JONES: Leonard, I want to turn to you and talk a little bit more about this issue of using the portfolio system to assess how a student is doing. I did a story on standardized testing a year or so ago and had a fascinating conversation with a researcher who really just wholeheartedly believes in the portfolio system as the only way to do that.

I alluded earlier to the fact that perhaps there would be some that would think this is simply not manageable for large numbers of students as a way to do it across the board. But I want to hear more about how you use it in your school.

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: The reality is that if we want a true assessment of what a child can do and we want to be able to create a community of learners, children who are thinkers, doers and risk takers, we have to be able to look at their work and, as a community of professionals, decide what is standard bearing and then how we move children to that level while ensuring that children understand what is standard bearing work.

The best way to do that is by looking at the actual work. We must attach rubrics according to criteria about what constitutes a one, two, three or four based upon our agreement in out community. For example, first grade teachers will get together and decide that when we look at a child's written piece of work or math this will be what we consider a one, two, three or four based upon that criterion. For example, in math, does a child demonstrate organization? Does the child demonstrate knowledge of computation? In writing, does the child demonstrate organization? Very similar. Does a child write in complete sentences? What about spelling? Don't forget about that.

There has to be some sort of standard and we have to be able to move the educational agenda by having children understand how they're being assessed. Once the child understands how they're being assessed they're able to move on to the next level. And when children are working in our design groups or working in our cooperative groups, children are able then to talk to each other, confer with each other as well as with the teacher to be able to move the agenda and to better understand how to improve their work product. What does it mean for a third grader to be able to come up with a first draft, the second draft and then a final draft? What does this revision mean? And how do we move that?

The major issue here, also, is that for early childhood education in New York, as well as other places, what hits me is that those who are working with our youngest children, our three-year-olds and two-year-olds and four-year-olds are paid the least. The expectation of their training is lower than a sanitation worker. The reality is that if we're going to raise the level for students, then we have to raise the level of expectation of those early education workers, help to put them on a professional level as we do elementary school teachers or private school teachers. And so, rather than a parent paying $25,000 for a PK program here in New York or $20,000 dollars at a private school, we make good public schools. And you can only do that by lifting the educational standards of those working in these programs and providing an appropriate pay level. We've got to have on board all the governors, all the presidents, leaving any Bush you want behind…

[LAUGHTER]

That's not a political speech. We must remember when we come up to Christmas time that there are no trees in the White House, just Bushes.

RACHEL JONES: And on that note….

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: But the issue is that we could have the president, the governor, the mayor, and everybody proclaim to love early childhood education. We want to educate our three-year-olds, but what about funding for the workers? What about the educational level of the workers? What about the professional development of the workers?

RACHEL JONES: That's one of the things I found intriguing about Smart Start because the funding includes monies to do just that. So it's an effort that not only deals with quality day care and providing materials and tools for developing these programs, but there's also a focus on making sure that there's extra training available for people who work in that industry.

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: There has to be focus. There has to be purpose. It has to be thoughtful and, yes, programs can't just be remedial. Those will fail. The programs also have to provide enrichment. When we look at the enrichment model, those are successful models. When we take it from a remedial model, those children fail and that becomes the concept of retention rather a concept of moving children to the next level. And portfolios do provide enrichment, by the way.

We also have to be able to look at these issues as a school community. For example, the other day in professional development I brought together my fourth and fifth grade teachers. We looked at a child's work. I asked everyone to bring from the class a sample of a child's written work. Not the best work, just a sample. And we look at these samples together every year to raise the level of what we want these children to come out with. How we want that piece of written work to look. The teachers come, we look, and we decide how we are going to create the rubrics to match the work and then have children understand what are the criteria for success in that area. Then we publish it for the parents, and we also give homework rubrics. So when we mark homework it's not with a red check with a plus. Nobody can understand what a check or a plus is anyway, but people start to understand what a one, two, three and four mean.

Question: What Is the Role of the Community in Developing Early Education Programs?

RACHEL JONES: This is actually a good place for me to bring in Janine because I made a note during your remarks about family-community partnerships. I'm curious about your thoughts

regarding the role of bringing in the community in decision-making or in the development process in early childhood education programs. Can you tell me a little bit about what's going on there?

JANINE BACQUIE: I think that family and community partnerships are a very important part of what we're doing with early childhood. Not only is there a countywide early childhood initiative where the public schools work with the public libraries, Health and Human Services and private agencies to offer these services, but we also have done a tremendous amount of outreach in the community. With parents, we provide literacy parties in different languages. We have family reading nights. We have a number of community forums and programs that are designed to educate parents about early literacy and the expectations for their child when they enter in kindergarten. But we also provide some opportunities to have the families come in and be involved in some of the transition activities before the child comes to kindergarten. So we just acknowledge that the parents are the child's first teachers.

And if we have a number of families coming from different countries who are used to a different educational system, then it's really our role to let them know what the expectations are for the students here, and to provide support for them in terms of knowing what the expectations are for literacy and learning to read supporting the child's well being.

So we've just done a tremendous amount of outreach. We also have in our county the Month of the Young Child initiative. During that time period we work with public and private agencies to raise the awareness level in the community about early literacy. We go to malls, and we have television and news ads, and we just really make a concerted effort to make the parents aware of the school programs and to work with them.

RACHEL JONES: The Packard Foundation last week released a report about the impact of being an immigrant child on their educational experiences. One of the things that was mentioned was that participation by parents of immigrant children in things like PTA is low. And, I wonder do you see that in Montgomery County, and have your efforts been able to raise these numbers?

JANINE BACQUIE: Yes, absolutely. And I think that again you have to really take a look at what languages and countries and people you have represented and to be able to provide some of these programs in other languages. You have to have translated materials. You have to go into the community where some of the different forums and festivals and activities are going on and go to the places where the families are.

We've been seeing a large increase in the number of immigrant families who have been participating in the school system. But you have to go and seek out those families, and you have to be able to speak with them in their own languages and be able to take a look at the culture and what the needs are and help to bridge that gap between the community and the schools. So I think we've had large success in reaching out to immigrant families and trying to ensure that people understand that this achievement gap is really an opportunity gap. We communicate that it's important for families to have their children participate in these programs. We ask if they know of any other families who also may be eligible. It's important for them to get into school. We've really had large outreach efforts.

Question: How Does the Court Order Mandating PK in Low-Income Districts in New Jersey Affect Implementation?

RACHEL JONES: Ellen, I wanted to get back to the role of legislation in this process. One thing that interested me was the early education programs available in cities like Newark and large urban centers. Are most of the Abbott schools in urban settings?

ELLEN FREDE: Well, it's more that all urban centers are Abbott.

RACHEL JONES: Oh. Okay.

ELLEN FREDE: There are some Abbotts that aren't urban. They're supposed to be but they're not always.

RACHEL JONES: When you think about this from a state perspective, though, you're having to not only deal with this issue for urban districts but there's suburban districts, and there's rural districts. I want to have you talk about creating a program or bringing quality early childhood education statewide and what you have to consider when it comes to providing these services in one area versus the other.

ELLEN FREDE: It is hard for me to talk about legislation when we've got this court order. But I can talk a little about lessons that, at least in my opinion, have been learned from the court order. The court order is wonderful when funding is tight because it cannot be touched. But the court order is also very difficult because we spend a lot of time in court, as I mentioned. There's fighting over what the court meant. And there is the sense that - 'of course I'm right, so just leave me alone.'

But I think that it's an interesting situation in New Jersey where people are looking at 30 districts. Parents are getting full day, full year, high quality programs. The kind of program I can't even find in my community. This is the suburban parent looking at what's happening over there and wondering, 'can I live there?' It's not your income level that determines whether you get it. And, in fact, in some of those smaller communities, we've seen ads in newspapers that say "apartment for rent - free preschool." And we have higher enrollment in preschool than we have in first grade in some of the smaller areas. In the larger ones it's more intractable.

So there is this momentum getting built because of the concentration of programs in the low-income districts. Other people start saying, 'well, I should have that, too.' And the legislators have trouble justifying why they are not getting them. I want to say, also, regarding teacher pay that, regardless of where the child is served, teachers get paid the same amount. So they get paid the same in a contracted child care center as any public school across New Jersey and, again, the court pushed for that.

I think that having that kind of momentum then creates a push to spread access. So it's hard to say. Say I'm a new state. I'm one of the states that doesn't have preschool - what would I do? There are only a handful of options. But would I want a court order? Would I want legislation? Would I want a public referendum like in Florida? Whatever gets the momentum rolling, I think, will push the public will a little bit more because, as Ruby said, parents want these programs to be available. Very few people really object to funding preschool for low-income children and, when they see it, they think 'me too.' You know, 'why shouldn't I be getting it as well?'

RACHEL JONES: Well, again, in my mind that's the genius of Smart Start because 30 percent of the money must be used for low income subsidies of children in the state, but any child can participate in a Smart Start funded program. That is a way to maybe circumvent some of the objections.

ELLEN FREDE: That's the basic idea behind ELLI, the Early Launch to Learning Initiative in New Jersey.

Question: How do We Make a Seamless Transition from PK to kindergarten to elementary school?

RACHEL JONES: Dick, I want you to talk a little bit more about this issue of a 'seamless transition.' I wrote that phrase down because that, to me, seems to be the core of these kinds of programs. A core that provides for young children, when they're entering kindergarten, a foundation and structure that makes their transition seamless. What does that mean?

RICHARD CLIFFORD: Well, maybe I should start before with one of my favorite stories that relates. I have a good friend who is a school superintendent in North Carolina, and he sends a letter to every child born in his district every year. That was the first contact between the schools and the home - immediately after the child was born. And I think we have to start thinking along those lines, as though our connection between our schools and early childhood programs should begin with parents as soon as possible. And that it's more than just our telling them what they should be

doing. It's incorporating them into making decisions about how to organize programs. How to interact with parents. What role is appropriate for them. Parents need to be an important part of that. And I think that's even more true, even more important, when we're talking about families that may come from a different cultural background than those that are part of the dominant culture in our community, whatever that community is.

So I think we have to build these partnerships with parents and family. So that's part of the 'seamless.' But another part of it is that adults who are working with children in these different settings, in these different periods in children's lives, actually talk to one another. They meet with one another. They see the children in the settings that they're in before and after they work with them. So they have a better understanding of what children's experiences are when they come to them and what their experiences are likely to be when they leave them. And I think all of those things are important in the process.

Question: Are We Building a Social Movement around Early Education?

RACHEL JONES: So as I review and think about what we've talked about today another word pops into my mind and that is 'movement.' Are we at the point in our country's history and in our dealings with educational issues that it might even be possible to begin talking about a tangible movement for early childhood education? Ruby?

RUBY TAKANISHI: Well, I'm sorry that Dave Lawrence isn't here. He is a member of our board and has really been a prime mover in the state of Florida. I think Dave would say, absolutely, we are in the process of building a social movement. I think that's what we're trying to do. I'm not really sure how we do it. We've talked about it. Do you try to mobilize parents, for example, even though I think we have a really good sense that parents are very supportive of it. There have been so many efforts to try to mobilize parents around any issue. And that's proven to be very difficult.

How do you build a social movement among educators, for example, if we think that's a very crucial group? There certainly seems to be some momentum around the business community. I think, really, the best example that I can put forward is what's happened in the state of Massachusetts for Early Education for All. Melissa Ludtke, who is the editor of The Nieman Reports, just completed a case study, a prospective case study. She closely followed that campaign in Massachusetts over a period of two or three years. And that case study, I think, is either on our website or about to be on our website, so I really encourage you to take a look at it. What she's trying to do is to describe in a documentary format the unfolding of what I think might be called a social movement. At least, up until now, a fairly successful social movement to bring early childhood education for all three- and four- and five-year-olds in the state of Massachusetts.

I don't know if I would say what Dave Lawrence did in Florida constitutes a social movement or if what Zell Miller did in Georgia was a social movement, but those certainly are examples of social progress that we have made into case studies and put up on our website. There are also other successful campaigns, such as Think New Mexico, which brings full school day Kindergarten to that state, a process that is nearly complete after a five year rollout.

So, there are certainly examples of successful movements in the states. It's harder to think of a national social movement.

RACHEL JONES: Well, that is, I guess, what I was getting at. I'll put that question to each of you individually. From a one school perspective to a county perspective to a state perspective, what is your responsibility to help spark a movement, or do you feel you have one? Do you feel it's possible to create a national social movement?

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: Oh absolutely. I think that we have the seeds of an understanding of where we have to go in the 21st century. Our job is to inform, to educate and to build the next educated populous of our country. To build the next line of doctors, lawyers, and educators - whomever they may be. And you can't do that without the firm foundation or without getting people to understand the importance of the early years and bringing the parents into that.

I think we're at the entrance of another American Revolution. We had the first American Revolution in 1776 and in the '60s we had a second American Revolution. These were really social, educational, political revolutions that changed the course this country has gone. Now we're in another revolution. The revolution of knowing how people learn, basing what we do upon brain research and then valuing the efforts of those in the educational community, particularly those who are working with the youngest learners. And this revolution is providing the wherewithal for those children, for the most fragile children, the youngest children, providing the seeds of learning and building upon that foundation.

And the revolution will come when we have universal education for all three-year-olds in public schools. Universal education for all four-year-olds in public schools. And when we are able to create that seamless flow into the network of kindergarten, first grade and on. But in order to ferment that revolution we have to provide politically, socially and economically within the large picture from the micro to the macro, making the right connections for this to happen.

We also have to provide the funding for this to happen. And the basic cry from the population is there. The essence of who we are shows a social economic need based upon two working families. And we have single parenthood and other types of family relationships where there are children without a parent there all day who need caregivers.

Again, educational systems are connected directly to the cultural environment and the needs of the society. The cultural environment in the 21st century, the needs of society in the 21st century demand that we have and provide a strong educational environment. Not remedial, but enriched for our youngest children all the way up to grade 12 by providing 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We have to do this because of the economic social conditions of the demands of our 21st century environment.

RACHEL JONES: Let's bring Janine into this. Do you feel that what Montgomery County is doing is a part of that kind of movement, and do you have a responsibility to teach this lesson to other counties?

JANINE BACQUIE: I would say absolutely. I think individual states have really laid the groundwork for the national movement. I would also say that I think that in terms of providing national standards or expectations it's really important that we emphasize the high quality aspect of the programs. We really just want to make sure that there is not a bifurcated system where we have children who, because of the impact of poverty or mobility or limited English proficiency or special needs, are relegated to programs that have lower expectations.

But I think the groundwork really has been laid. I think that early intervention is very important. I think that it's more than cost effective, and I think that these types of discussions can help to propel that movement forward. But definitely we have to ensure those high quality standards in any discussion about national expectations or outcomes because we want the highest and best expectations for all of our children regardless of their background.

RACHEL JONES: Ellen, you said earlier that the court order was a good thing because you can't touch that money. Is that what it will take in multiple areas in states across the country to get quality early childhood education?

ELLEN FREDE: I think there are other states that are looking at the courts as an avenue. As you said, there's legislation and there are other avenues for going at it.

I wanted actually to answer your other question about the social movement. The two things in New Jersey that I think are really important, and which I haven't acknowledged, are the roles of some of my partners here today. In particular, in terms of getting the social revolution going, the Association for Children in New Jersey's Cindy Rice is in the audience and other people from higher education like Sharon Ryan are also here. The progress happens because of the work of a coalition, and it's a diverse coalition. But one of the problems with a diverse coalition is figuring out what your mission is. First we have to focus, at least in the beginning, on getting Abbott right. And then we'll do universal PK, and then we'll worry about zero to three. Because if you try to get everything at

once, you're going to lose. There is no way you're going to get that lift. So I think that's been real important.

And then the other thing I just wanted to say about that issue is that almost every time I meet with the group of public school administrators who are the direct administrators of this program, we call them early childhood supervisors because that's typically their title, I remind them that the eyes of the nation are on us and that we have to make this work right. We are spending lots of money per child. Over $10,000 dollars per child just for the educational part and another $4,000 for the wraparound. Across the state it's about a $500 million dollar investment in preschool and that's not talking about the other childcare that's going on. That's just DOE funding. Just Department of Education funding.

And we've got everything in place. We've got the quality standards that you're talking about. But we're not there yet. We've got a lot of work to do. But if we don't get this right we have doomed preschool nationally. So I try to use the uplifting rah, rah we're wonderful and you're all wonderful, but at the same time, I try to instill a little fear. I don't care if you're working 10 hour days - we have to keep working and we have to make this work. And I think that's part of the social revolution. If we can show that on a statewide scale we actually change children's lives then it will be a revolution.

I have to tell a little story. David Weikart was the founder of the High/Scope Foundation, and he started the Perry Preschool Study, which is what's used often to justify preschool for low-income children. It is a longitudinal study they just completed the last phase and the results aren't out yet. The subjects have gone past age 40 at this point, which is pretty amazing and exciting.

I worked at the High/Scope Foundation and when the age 19 study came out while I was working there, David brought all the staff together to celebrate the release of the study. He said at that time that this is the beginning of a social revolution. We will have universal preschool. Sadly, he passed away last year. But I think he was able to see that it was working before he died.

RACHEL JONES: Dick, I'm really interested in your thoughts on this issue.

RICHARD CLIFFORD: I have three points I want to make. I know we're running out of time here. Let me just start by building on that. I do think that there is a movement. It's going to happen. Most of our three- and four-year-old children are already in programs. The decision is what are the programs going to be like? Who's going to pay for them? Who's going to run them? That that's what we're deciding now in our country.

I think it's particularly important because it's not necessarily going to be done well. We have an opportunity at this point in our lives, and the life of our country, to help design the system of services for young children that really serves the needs of the children and their families, not necessarily just the needs of the professionals or the existing service providers. I think that's what we have to be careful of. We have four streams of service currently serving these children; Head Start, Early Intervention Services, childcare and the schools. The American dilemma is - how do we build those diverse delivery streams into a system that's good for all children and families? That's a unique problem for America, and I think that's really what we're trying to solve.

Just building on your comment, Leonard, I think it was de Tocqueville who said when he came to the U.S. from France and wrote about his experiences that he was enthusiastic about American society. I don't know if you know de Tocqueville. But he said that the genius of America is that it reinvents itself with each new generation. And I think that's what we're doing. It is our turn to reinvent America.

RACHEL JONES: And on that note I think we are winding things down. But what I would like to ask each of you to do right now is to join me in thanking the members of our forum here.

[APPLAUSE]

If anyone does have any questions, please feel free to ask at this time.

Question: How Do You Build a Coherent System of Early Education?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [UNINTEL] come from NYU. It turns out that I've been doing research on immigrant kids in a parallel way on school organization and grade span. What's really striking about these areas is there seems to be these themes that are coming through. I was reading that little thing about your school. There are 1,000 kids in the [UNINTEL]. So, on the one hand, we're seeing pushes for smaller schools. On the other hand we're seeing pushes for a longer grade span from K to eight. And, at the same time, we're worried about these immigrant children, many of whom come after PK and are entering the school system in kindergarten and first and second grade. I think the evidence is starting to show that they don't catch up that quickly because they're coming in midstream.

So I'm wondering, given these complicated factors, how you put together a coherent strategy if, on the one hand we're arguing for longer grade spans, on the other hand we're arguing for smaller schools and then we're going to expand that even farther down the ladder. How does this all come together in a coherent plan?

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: The size of an organization doesn't count. We could superimpose these programs onto a large or small school. But it means nothing without quality. It means nothing without good professional development and a dedicated and devoted staff. And it means nothing without appropriate funding.

So we have to put all of that together to make it work. Then we have to be able to meet the children at their level and then raise their level - not downgrade their level. We can't say, 'oh, these are immigrant children, what do they know?' No, we have to be able to ascertain and assess where those children are. How literate are they in their own language? How can we now raise their level to a higher level while at the same time help them gain mastery in English? It takes a lot of hard work, and it takes a community to be able to bring that together.

We're not a small school. But when you walk into my school you think you're in a small school, and that's the type of community we have built, and that's the type of community that can be replicated. We integrate the arts. In a lot of places they took out the arts. We integrate technology. I have two science teachers, upper grade and lower grade. We have physical education. We have things that are important for the children's well-being, and we integrate it into a total program based around what makes sense. We use a theme. And we work towards that theme for the year integrating everything that we do.

RACHEL JONES: Let's go to you.

Question: How Does PK - 3 Relate to Children in Unlicensed, Unregulated Child Care?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Richard Sussman from The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Thank you all very much. It's been quite exciting.

About 35 percent of the preschool children in Harford, Connecticut are in publicly funded, unlicensed, unregulated care. We haven't talked at all about what your vision is for thinking about the connection of those children to the K through three. I'd like the panel to respond to that.

ELLEN FREDE: I'll start. We need to get them out of it. [LAUGHS] I mean…

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Publicly supported. State funds. There is an appreciation on the legislature's part that parents have choice. What do you say?

ELLEN FREDE: In the context of our program we purposely said, no, that's not a choice. While we have choice among different childcare centers, Head Start, public school, the unregulated family childcare, there is no research to show that children get good results from unregulated family

childcare. Is it a good thing? That's what my son had. The state doesn't have an interest in funding these options. At least my state doesn't. Because I can't show it works.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Did they fund Abbott?

ELLEN FREDE: Through voucher childcare, yes. But not for preschool. Preschool in New Jersey is also childcare. But it's not childcare that happens to have some education attached. It's education that also happens to be good care for children. It's a matter of emphasis.

Question: How Does Wrap-Around Care Compare to Education Time?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Well that was the [UNINTEL] you made in your presentation a number of times between education and wrap-around, as if the kid's experience is any different in that hour and a half or two hours in the study…

ELLEN FREDE: It is different, though, because the class size can be different; they can have different teachers.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: But should it be?

ELLEN FREDE: In the best of all worlds - no. But you can't have a teacher teach 10 hours, so they're going to have a different adult anyway. I would love it if there were that kind of funding. But, again, this is a research-based program, and as long as there's not poor quality, I mean harmful things going on - and that is regulated by the way the wraparound is closely monitored - it's not going to diminish what happens in a six hour program. But, yes, it would be wonderful to have the whole thing at a lower class size and always have certified teachers. But there's some tradeoffs you have to make. Look, we got the Cadillac, what do you want? [LAUGHS]

RICHARD CLIFFORD: I'll say a word to that. I do think that is part of what I was getting at. We've got these four different funding streams of services. Childcare, which is the one you're talking about, is one of these streams. We've got to figure out how to cut across the bureaucracy to say that this is the quality that we'll accept regardless of who pays for it, and we can do that. We can do that. We can say that this education is important for the child regardless of what funding source is paying for the service.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Any examples, though, where states have backed off of that situation?

RICHARD CLIFFORD: Yeah. North Carolina has taken a couple of approaches. Our first approach was to pay so little that the Feds actually required us to do it for a while. I think maybe that's no longer true. When I was in the division we actually had to offer that as an option for families. But what we did was we set the payment rates so low that very few families accepted. A few thousand families in all of North Carolina. We fund over 100,000 kids. So that was one way.

The second way, which we're doing now, is to develop a common set of standards that are going to be applied across those four different streams of service so that if anyone of those pays for it, they're going to have to meet this standard of service. And whether we're going to get there with that part of it or not, I don't know, but we're working at it.

RUBY TAKANISHI: I think one example would be how the Georgia voluntary PK program works. I mean, you have a set of common standards, operating principles with a monitoring device that monitors procedures, so it really doesn't matter what you're called. What matters is the experience of the children and the standards that guide those experiences. I agree with Dick - that's the kind of approach that certainly I would move toward.

Oklahoma would be another kind of interesting situation because they have a universal preschool program that started in their public schools. But now, as they're trying to expand it, they're starting to include childcare centers and Head Start centers. But those programs also have to abide by the

same principles and standards that the public schools do, or else they can't be called part of the universal preschool program in Oklahoma.

So I think that's the kind of direction that we should go to and forget about what these programs are called.

RACHEL JONES: Janine, you had a quick comment?

JANINE BACQUIE: I just want to add that building the capacity of the childcare providers is a timely issue. And when we start talking about these national or state standards and the expectations for preschool across the board, we're not serving all of the children who are preschool age within the school system. So what about all of the other thousands of children who are in family childcare and other kinds of childcare centers?

We're trying to work with providers to help provide some training and some curriculum support. But in terms of funding there really isn't…I mean, there've been state cuts in purchase of care and working parents assistance and scholarship monies provided for childcare providers to get training or work towards degrees. But I think that, until there is some funding that really is looking at the professional development of the providers, they just can't meet those expectations so that those children really can compete with the children who've been in programs with a credentialed teacher that is state certified and has the supports of the school and ongoing professional development.

When we start talking about this national movement and the set of expectations it requires, there has to be a funding stream that's also going to support these providers. Otherwise, when the children enter kindergarten, one's been in a high quality program with an emphasis on literacy and the other one has been maybe in another program that has not really focused on those foundational strategies. So we have to continue to work with the childcare providers. They have to be a part of the discussion. But I'm very concerned that we do not lower the standards and the expectations for children because they're in different environment.

ELLEN FREDE: I just want to explain that it was the unregulated part that freaked me out here. Not that it was childcare.

Question: What's the Most important Single Thing a Principal Should Do to Move PK - 3 Forward?

RACHEL JONES: We have run over but I think we can take just a few more questions. Is that okay? Let's go here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3: The National Association of Elementary School Principals, the organization of which Leonard is a distinguished member has taken a public stand and purports publicly funded universal access for PK programs and I'm in the early stages of developing a guide to those standards in terms of working with early elementary school programs and what they should know and be able to do.

I'd just like to ask you each for a sound byte about what's the most important single thing that a principal should either know or be able to do in order to be part of the process.

RUBY TAKANISHI: I'll start off since I know a little bit about the project. I think every elementary school principal should firmly act on the knowledge that his or her responsibility for elementary education begins at age three with universal PK.

RACHEL JONES: Leonard?

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: We have to have an understanding of the development of young children and be the advocates for bridging that durable bridge between home and the school. At the same time we must advocate for quality universal PK education for three- and four-year-olds with trained

personnel and for implementing high standards as appropriate pay for teachers. We should be creating these programs so that public education is seamless.

At this point I am working on a universal or an educational complex creating a PK to 12 system with the school across the street which happens to be a failing school. But the concept is that we will send out the sixth graders and, if they continue the type of programming we do in seventh grade, they'll be successful.

Look at my class of 2002 - out of 123 children, 26 made Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant or Brooklyn Tech. So the foundation was there in the elementary grades. We have to build that foundation for three- and four-year-olds. Then when we have to focus on the immigrant populations, which are coming into the schools and we have to be able to meet their needs at their level in grades K, one and two.

RACHEL JONES: Janine?

JANINE BACQUIE: I would just like to say that if they include and ensure early childhood programs, they're going to get the types of outcomes that they want at grade two and three in terms of the standardized testing and the reading by grade level by the third grade. Providing better early education will help them to insure the outcomes that they're held accountable for at higher grades. So it's very important that they start early because that foundation is just going to help all of their students be successful. And it's also going to help them to start building successful relationships with the parents and engaging families prior to Kindergarten.

RACHEL JONES: Ellen?

ELLEN FREDE: Get educated or get out of the way.

[LAUGHTER]

RACHEL JONES: Now that's a sound bite. Dick?

RICHARD CLIFFORD: I think mine is not new - but we need to believe that this is a legitimate part of the educational enterprise.

Question: How Can PK Be Implemented So It Does Not Take Funding Away from K - 12?

RACHEL JONES: One more question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4: I'm Stephanie Fanjul from the National Education Association representing the unions for 2.7 million K-12 teachers who I promised…

ELLEN FREDE: PK to 12!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4: Well, I wanted to speak for a minute about the challenge because certainly both of the big teacher's unions, both AFT and NEA, has very clear policies about how important pre-Kindergarten is.

But one of the places we're getting stuck is around the money. And we're getting stuck around the money - right now New Mexico's in this place, Florida's in this place. We're getting stuck when it's being played as an either / or. And, so, when New Mexico says we want to fund PK but to do we're going to shave down the K-12 over-expenditures. That isn't going to get the K-12 teachers to be supportive of the concept of PK. Or, in Florida, where they did it so cheaply that the schools said there is no way we can provide quality at that price.

So I think that, to bring this to the next level, we have to find a way not to make it either/or and we have to push on the policymakers to figure out where the money can come from so that both things

can be done well. The reason I say K-12 in this conversation, Ellen, is because that's how it feels when you're trying…when you feel like the K-12 system is under siege. When the public school system feels like it's under siege, it's hard for them to stretch to include another group that in most cases they firmly believe is part of the whole educational system in America.

RACHEL JONES: Any thoughts about this?

RUBY TAKANISHI: Yes, I'll start off since some people mentioned revolution. I think we should rethink our K through 12 system. Maybe it shouldn't be a K through 12 system. Maybe it should be a P through 10 system for example. We have more alternatives for people now in grade 10 to go into a number of different pathways.

We really have to break out. Grantmakers have the same problem as those in other sectors. We just have to break out of the K through 12 system mold and rethink it. When it begins and when it ends.

RACHEL JONES: Any other thoughts or comments?

JANINE BACQUIE: I would just like to say that just within Montgomery County, the superintendent and the Board of Education, they really shored up all the stakeholders - all of the different community groups, the county executive. So there's a whole contingent of people who have taken a look at the data and said, 'okay, we are all in agreement that we have to move forward with early childhood education. And so it does cost. There is a cost and there are dollars associated with it.' But I think having a group of stakeholders come forward to say that this is a priority is better than one individual or a superintendent standing alone. So just bringing all the stakeholders on board is maybe one possible way to move forward.

ELLEN FREDE: I just think it has to be done in the context of public school. I don't mean that it has to be done in a public school. But that is the only way you're going to win the argument that it should be funded at the same level. And how do you have a class size of 15, even a class size of 20, with two adults and pay less than you pay for child in K-12? You can't do it.

If you want a strong educational program you're not going to get any bang for your buck. And I think that's the only way that we are going to move the quality forward and the funding forward is in that context.

RICHARD CLIFFORD: I actually do think that can happen. It's not a zero sum game. I don't think it's a question of taking money away from the K-12 system to fund this. Other states have expanded the resource base to be able to move forward, and I think that's part of what the educational establishment needs to understand in order to pursue this.

LEONARD GOLUBCHICK: The reality is that if we're looking at how best to have an educated populous - and I started off saying that the best defense for a democracy is an educated populous - we have to start doing what the Israelis do: make the education budget a part of the defense budget and fund it as we would fund a B52 bomber.

ELLEN FREDE: And Rob Dugger says that all of us are not going to have Social Security if we don't educate these kids.

[LAUGHTER]

RACHEL JONES: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ruby for inviting me and allowing me to be a part of this discussion. It's my suspicion that you and the Foundation for Child Development are the visionaries that are providing a great deal of the fuel for the movement. So, let's all join in in thanking Ruby and the Foundation for this forum.

[APPLAUSE]

RUBY TAKANISHI: I'd like to thank all of you for coming. And I'd like to thank Rachel and all of the members of the panel because we couldn't have this conversation without them.

[APPLAUSE]