

# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME:

## Listening to and Learning with the Family Child Care Community

Final Report | August 2019

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## FOREWORD

New York City has made major investments in high-quality, affordable early care and education programs over the last decade. To continue to create a more unified birth-to-5 early care and education system in New York City, the EarlyLearn system transitioned from ACS to the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) in July 2019. To prepare for this transition, Bank Street College of Education (Bank Street) partnered with the NYCDOE to pilot a set of professional learning opportunities in Districts 23 and 27 with the goal of creating a pathway to consistent high-quality experiences for children ages birth–3 in FCC settings. This project is called the *D23 & D27 FCC Support Pilot (FCC Pilot)*.

As part of the FCC Pilot, Bank Street collaborated with Amy Dombro, an early childhood educator and documentarian, to capture FCC providers' voices. Amy Dombro's final report, *There's No Place Like Home: Listening to and Learning with the Family Child Care Community*, shares insights and lessons learned from providers over the course of the 2018-19 year. The NYCDOE is committed to ensuring that the EarlyLearn transition reflects the wisdom, strengths, and needs of FCC providers. Working with Bank Street to commission this report is one important example of that commitment.

This report deepens understanding of FCC providers and the vital role they play in the lives of many of the city's youngest children and their families and gives NYCDOE the information needed to determine strategies that build upon existing strengths as its partnership with the provider community continues. Rather than the typical deficit-based approach geared to "fix" a problem, NYCDOE and partners aim to build upon strengths and create an environment that encourages openness to learning and genuine collaboration.

It is our hope that the insights and perspectives offered here can inform not only what supports can be offered during and after this organizational transition, but also how to engage with the provider community as authentic learning partners and collaborators.

### ABOUT AMY DOMBRO

Amy Laura Dombro, MS, develops resources that invite educators, family support professionals, and agency and community leaders to consider how their decisions can create positive change for young children and families. She documents stories of success and lessons learned from individuals and change initiatives so that users can benefit from the experiences of others. Her recent publications include: *Powerful Interactions: How to Connect with Young Children to Extend Their Learning* and *Coaching with Powerful Interactions: A Guide for Partnering with Early Childhood Teachers*.

For information about Amy Dombro's approach to documentation, visit her website at [www.amydombro.com](http://www.amydombro.com).

### ABOUT BANK STREET

Bank Street College of Education is a leader in progressive education, a pioneer in improving the quality of classroom practice, and a national advocate for children and their families. We seek to strengthen not only individuals, but the community as well, including family, school, and the larger society in which adults and children, in all their diversity, interact and learn. We see in education the opportunity to build a better society. In 2014, Bank Street created the Education Center, a new division, to disrupt inequity through system-level change and to help design better educational experiences for both children and adults. In deep collaboration with program partners—from teachers and families to policymakers and higher education leaders—the Education Center creates customized strategies that support strengths-based, learner-centered, and equitable educational practices to help all students and educators thrive in school settings. Through our work, we are building an evidence base to inform local practice and address some of the nation's deepest organizational challenges currently hindering effective and equitable teaching and learning for all.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too often change initiatives in education move forward without seeing and knowing practitioners—their daily lives with children and families, interests, questions, and, most important of all, their strengths. The focus of the work becomes addressing deficits which has the unwanted consequences of depleting and undermining the energy and engagement of practitioners. Documentation provides the opportunity to listen to and learn with practitioners about their strengths and then to determine strategies to build upon these strengths. Adopting a strengths-based approach encourages openness to learning and genuine collaboration, enhancing the possibility of positive and sustained change.

Bank Street College of Education partnered with Amy Dombro to gather the voices of family child care (FCC) providers as the Early Learn System transitioned from ACS to the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). Conversations with New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Family Child Care Support (FCCS) managers, ACS EarlyLearn Network (Network) staff, and team members from Bank Street and All Our Kin (AOK) provide important context.

Over the last 10 months, the focus of our work all shifted from learning about attributes of family child care and deepening understanding of the daily life and role of providers (September 2018 to February 2019) to beginning to identify current quality practices and steps needed to build on existing strengths throughout the FCC community.

This report is divided into four parts. The first three parts highlight themes from the documentation and the fourth part outlines a set of recommendations to inform the FCC work moving forward.

### PART ONE: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY CHILD CARE

- **Strengths of family child care can make it an ideal place to provide care for babies, toddlers, and 2 and 3 year olds.** These attributes include convenience for families, home-like environment, cultural and linguistic sensitivity, continuity of care, small group size, and relationships with families.
- **Family child care is a bridge between home and school.** Daily routines in a home setting provide rich learning opportunities for children. A home environment provides natural opportunities to develop skills. In an effort to be “more professional,” many providers have converted their homes into “mini-centers.” Additional documentation will be required to develop a deeper understanding and responses to this shift.
- **Family child care providers wear many hats. They are both educators and business owners.** As a provider explains, “We’re the teacher, the secretary, chef, counselor, teacher, doctor, nurse, cook, mother, therapist, administrator, accountant, bookkeeper, groundskeeper, lesson planner, receptionist, and janitor.”
- **Providers have a wide range of financial and managerial obligations to run their programs.** Yet the reimbursement rate makes economic security almost impossible.

### PART TWO: BUILDING ON STRENGTHS TO ENHANCE QUALITY

- **Respectful, trusting relationships are critical to promoting positive change.** NYCDOE FCCS managers and Bank Street staff have built trust with providers during professional development sessions and coaching, even with the ongoing stress due to the lack of concrete information about reimbursement and next steps. These relationships have promoted a sense of community among providers and increased participation and engagement in professional development and coaching sessions.
- **Collaboration across cultures and roles is key to the success of the transition.** One size does not fit all when it comes to engaging with community-based child care Networks and providers. NYCDOE FCCS managers and partners state this is an area that requires continued effort and ongoing intention.

- **A shared understanding of quality in a home setting will provide a foundation for building on provider strengths.** Identifying and documenting family child care settings that demonstrate exemplary environments and practice will support efforts to enhance quality including the development of research-based curriculum materials for the New York City provider community.

### **PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LESSONS LEARNED**

- **Over the years, family child care professional development in New York City has ranged from very good to very poor. This is a chance to get it right.** Integrating insights and lessons learned from the FCC pilot can strengthen future professional development sessions by NYCDOE and its partners.
- **Professional learning supports are needed for all adult learners in the system, not just providers.** Individuals serving in all roles—NYCDOE FCCS managers, partners, and Network staff—have found benefit in the learning conversations with colleagues.
- **Amplifying the voices of family child care will ensure the transition remains grounded in the reality of providers’ lives and will build capacity within the provider community.**

### **PART FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CLOSING THOUGHTS**

Based on the themes emerging from this documentation effort, we propose the following recommendations to inform family child care work moving forward:

#### **CONTINUE TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

- Ensure providers and Network voices have a place at the table to be part of conversations and inform decisions that will shape the transition. Empower existing and future leaders in the provider community.

#### **CONTINUE TO DEEPEN THE UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY CHILD CARE**

- Continue to build and deepen respectful, trusting relationships by enhancing and implementing strategies to learn with and about the community and culture(s) of Networks, providers and families served.

#### **BUILD ON STRENGTHS TO ENHANCE QUALITY**

- Provide learning supports for all adult learners in the system (i.e., Network leaders, Network staff, DOE central team members), not just providers. This will involve identifying key messages and content for all. Additionally, it will be important to provide opportunities for professional learning conversations across roles.
- Create a structure and needed resources to support provider-run local associations or learning communities in which providers will have the opportunity to network with and learn from each other regularly. This should be done in close collaboration with providers and Network staff.
- Create a lessons learned guide about providing effective professional development conversations to support FCC providers for use by DOE and its partners in working with Networks. Articulating and integrating insights and lessons learned from the pilot will strengthen future professional development efforts.
- Gather stories and photos of settings and interactions that model exemplary practice. Then incorporate these stories and photos into a research-based, customized-for-NYC, professional development guide to help create a shared vocabulary and understanding of quality practice in a home setting.

## DOCUMENTATION APPROACH

### GROUNDING A CHANGE INITIATIVE IN SEEING PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR STRENGTHS

In an effort to promote quality, change initiatives typically offer professional development, coaching, and resources all with the goal of improving providers' practice. Yet too often these interventions are introduced without seeing and knowing the practitioners—their daily lives with children and families, interests, questions, and, most important of all, their strengths.

As a result, these interventions focus on “fixing” a problem. The focal point of the work becomes addressing deficits. This, in turn, has the unwanted consequences of depleting and undermining the energy and engagement of practitioners who typically work in isolation with limited resources, and who are often unseen and unsupported.

Documentation provides change initiatives with the opportunity to see and know practitioners to identify their strengths and then to determine strategies to build upon these strengths. The decision to adopt a strengths-based approach encourages openness to learning and genuine collaboration.

Quality in a change initiative is promoted through documentation when busy practitioners have the opportunity to:

- Be seen
- Acknowledge and build upon strengths and successes
- Identify questions and lessons learned
- View themselves as decision makers and thinkers
- Reinforce that what they say and do matters
- Deepen collaboration as they hear their own voices, and the voices of others
- Create a shared and collective history of progress
- Clarify steps in the path forward

“When a lot of people hear family day care, they think babysitter. Yet there are so many of us who have degrees. Who understand the importance of what we are doing to prepare children for schools. We need to let everyone know we can provide the same caliber of educational services provided in centers.

— FCC provider

## DOCUMENTING THE VOICES OF PROVIDERS

Providers' insights and stories are gathered to deepen the understanding of their daily lives and practices. This information is being used by NYCDOE and partners to identify and determine ways to build upon existing strengths and respond to challenges providers face to meet the ultimate goal of promoting quality care and education for New York City's young children and families using family child care.

For example, as providers are listened to and begin to see themselves more often in photographs, "real life" stories, and meaningful, applicable content in professional development and coaching conversations, they begin to hear their own voices and to understand that what they decide to say and do impacts the lives of young children and families.

As conversations during professional development sessions and coaching go beyond telling people what to do to explaining "why what you do matters," providers (and all of us) are more likely to become more engaged learners and to repeat these behaviors. An example of a "why it matters" statement is: "When you build trusting relationships, you set the stage for learning because children feel safe to explore and experiment."

## DOCUMENTING THE VOICES OF NETWORK STAFF MEMBERS

A few conversations occurred with Network staff on site at professional development sessions and during a monthly Network meeting convened by All Our Kin and Bank Street. Some quotes from these conversations are included in this report. There is much more to learn from conversations with Network staff in the future.

## DOCUMENTING THE VOICES OF NYCDOE FCCS MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

Meetings about providers' voices presented opportunities to document the voices of NYCDOE FCCS managers and project partners. These conversations provided feedback and a rich context to the provider voices in this report.

## DOCUMENTATION SOURCES

This document conveys insights and quotes gathered during conversations with providers and those who support them over the course of the FCC Pilot. This includes six focus groups with providers and group conversations with NYCDOE managers during a monthly Network meeting. In addition, conversations took place during one-on-one phone conversations with three providers and during three visits to homes. (Please see the Appendix for additional details.)

Some quotes below combine the thoughts of two providers. Each is credited to "FCC providers". Photos of providers do not imply attribution of quotes.

### SHIFT IN FOCUS

The main focus of this project is to gather the voices of family child care providers. Sharing these voices at meetings with NYCDOE FCCS managers, Network staff and team members from Bank Street and All Our Kin organically led to documenting some of their voices as well.

Over time, conversations have shifted from understanding "who are providers" to focus more on existing strengths and the resources required to support child care providers in providing quality early care and education for children and families. Early in the FCC Pilot, providers expressed concern that conversations about quality were suggesting that they were not doing a good job. As trust and respect developed, providers in the pilot became more open to share examples of quality from their programs and to incorporate ideas from professional development experiences and coaching into their practice.

**PART ONE:  
DEEPENING  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
FAMILY CHILD CARE**



## PART ONE: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY CHILD CARE

Findings from the FCC Pilot identified these strengths of family child care:

### FCC IS CONVENIENT FOR FAMILIES.

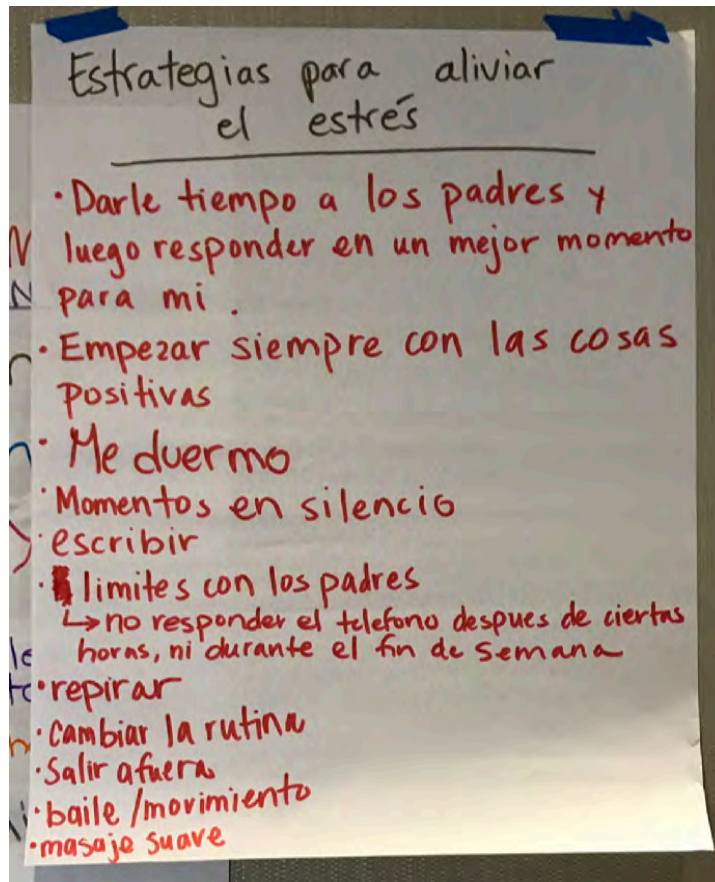
- Family child care programs are located in all communities and are easy to get to.
- Hours are flexible and can work for families with nontraditional schedules.

“ I have accepted babies at 5 AM because I had young mothers who would walk to drop off and then walk to work. I would have my husband pick up the babies while I set up for the day. These moms are young and struggling.

– FCC provider

### FCC IS CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY SENSITIVE.

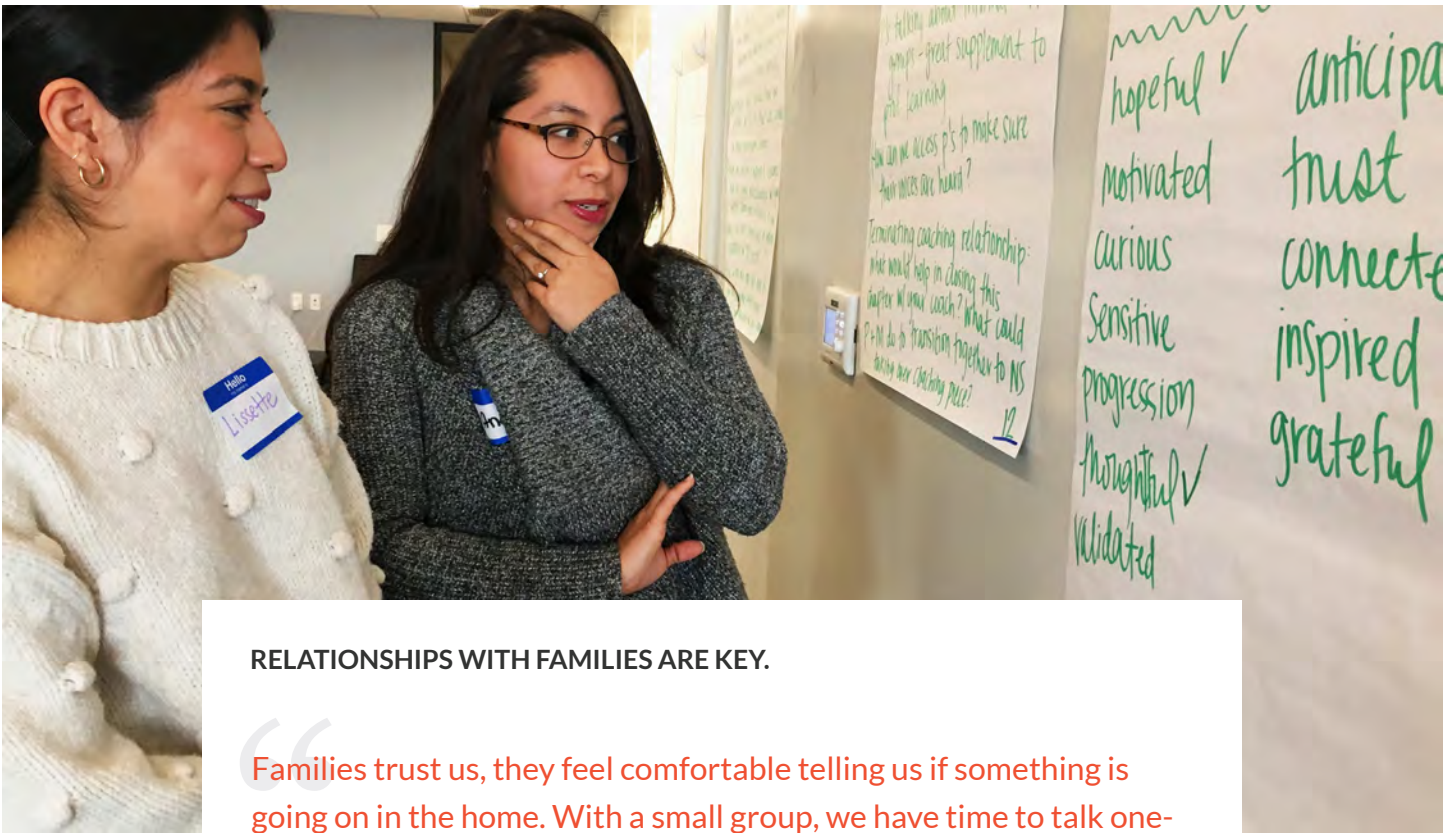
- Children ‘see’ themselves and their families reflected in the programming as their home language develop.
- Children are also likely to be exposed to other languages at a time when their brain is open to language learning.





**FCC BRINGS CONTINUITY OF CARE.**

“ In center-based care, children are moved at a certain time. When you’re in family child care, a child is with you for a couple years. I have kids that started with me from babies. One is 6 and 10 and they’re still with me for after-school care because of the relationship I have with the family. – FCC provider



**RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES ARE KEY.**

“Families trust us, they feel comfortable telling us if something is going on in the home. With a small group, we have time to talk one-on-one, we can sit down and talk about personal things... parents and children don't get lost along the way like they can in centers.

– FCC provider

“There is nothing more personal than having people in your home. They can see and feel what is important to you. What you value. And they can share what matters to them. – FCC provider



**SMALL GROUP-SIZE ALLOWS FOR INDIVIDUALIZED CARE.**

“Children who obtain emotional security have the confidence they need to learn and succeed. A small setting helps to build that emotional security in the children and they will feel confident when they go to school.

– FCC provider

**SMALL GROUP-SIZE ALLOWS FOR RECOGNITION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.**

“We get children at a very young age and watch them through various stages of development. We can pinpoint when there is a question about their development. – FCC provider



## FAMILY CHILD CARE IS A BRIDGE BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL.

Daily routines in a home setting provide rich learning opportunities for children who are creating their first pictures of who they are and how the world works. A home environment provides natural opportunities to develop school readiness skills including problem-solving, self-control, self-confidence, language, and literacy.

In an effort to provide quality care and education, many family child care providers have turned areas of their home into center-like environments. As wall charts, easels, child work tables, and learning centers are moved in, sofas, comfy chairs, and the family's dining table are moved out. Curriculum for many providers is viewed as a set of learning activities.

Ironically, at the same time, many infant/toddler centers try to emulate a home-like environment so that children are surrounded by familiar items and spend the day engaged in daily routines that in themselves are rich learning opportunities.

Gaining insight into how providers view a quality family child care setting and curriculum, especially for children age 3 and under, is one that will require more conversation with the community as the transition moves forward. This is especially important given that being associated with NYCDOE may encourage providers to be more "school-like".

Providers shared insights reflecting varying views:

“ I see FCC as the bridge between family and home setting and the larger setting of school setting. There's some aspect of the home setting and also school setting that's in the program. – FCC provider

“ My whole basement is the center – with cubbies, mats on the floors, book shelves, cots.... – FCC provider

“ Being like a center is good because you have everything there you need. But, there is something good in having a family environment, too. For example, children see you cooking in your kitchen. You have your husband and your children. That's why it's called "family" because my own kids help me with daycare kids. My husband is "Uncle J" to them and those are the things that you can't get in a center. – FCC provider

“ I make lesson plans to help me know what to teach children each day. Even the little ones. I want to be sure they leave my program with all the skills they need for kindergarten. – FCC provider



**FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS WEAR MANY HATS.  
THEY ARE BOTH EDUCATORS AND BUSINESS OWNERS.**

“We’re the teacher, the secretary, chef, counselor, teacher, doctor, nurse, cook, mother, therapist, administrator, accountant, bookkeeper, groundskeeper, lesson planner, receptionist, and janitor. — FCC provider

PROVIDERS HAVE A WIDE RANGE OF FINANCIAL AND MANAGERIAL OBLIGATIONS TO RUN THEIR PROGRAMS BUT THE REIMBURSEMENT RATE MAKES ECONOMIC SECURITY ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE.

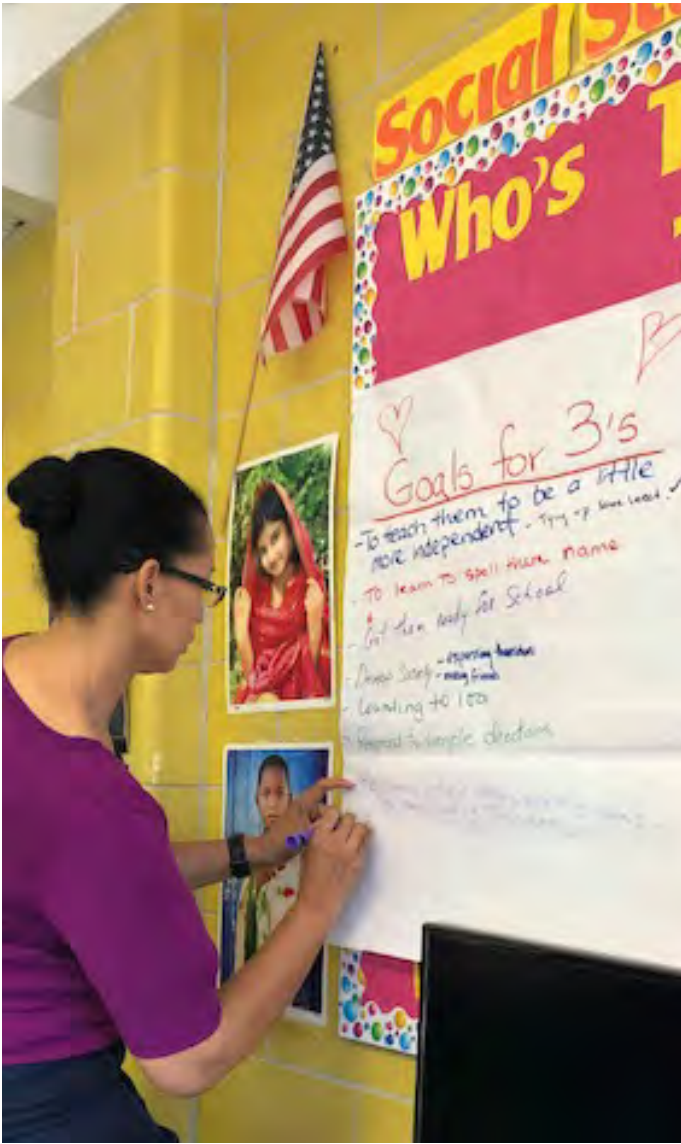
“What if my fridge goes out? If I don’t have enough money to buy a new fridge, I have no program.

— FCC provider

“I had my son last year on a Friday and was back to work on Monday morning. I had only four kids at the time and I was the only teacher. I needed the money. That Thursday I had to close to go back to the doctor. I didn’t feel well at all. And I didn’t get paid. — FCC provider

“For some providers, support being offered seems too little, too late. Providers can’t keep up with the rent costs and families that are part of gentrification in their neighborhoods. One provider joked, “I should become a dog walker not a child care provider. People in this neighborhood don’t have kids, they have dogs. We should open a doggie daycare.

— NYCDOE FCCS manager



**PART TWO:  
BUILDING ON STRENGTHS  
TO ENHANCE QUALITY**



## PART TWO: BUILDING ON STRENGTHS TO ENHANCE QUALITY

### RESPECTFUL, TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS ARE INTEGRAL TO SUPPORTING QUALITY.

Providers are the ultimate key to quality in their programs. Their decisions, actions, and words touch the lives of children and families every day. Respectful, trusting relationships between providers and those supporting them is a key first step in developing learning partnerships upon which strengths can be identified and relationships can be built.



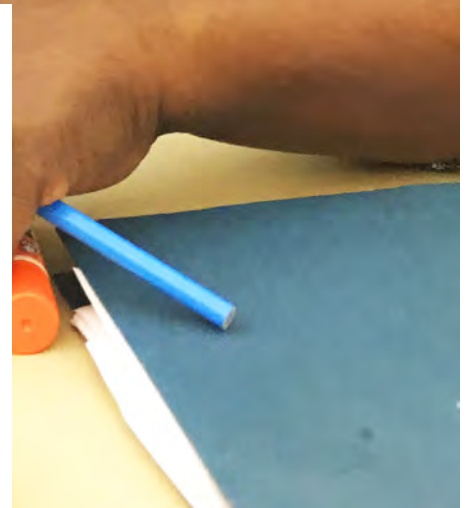
“We need to build respect and trust if we are going to be able to support providers to see and build upon their strengths.”

— NYCDOE FCCS manager



**MANY PROVIDERS HAVE THEIR GUARD UP. THEY'VE HAD SUPPORT PEOPLE COME AND GO IN THE PAST.**

“Providers have gotten support like we offer in the past. Why should they trust us now? They are asking, “So how long will you be here? Then what? There is anticipation of abandonment like before. — NYCDOE FCCS manager



TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS ARE GROWING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS AND COACHING.

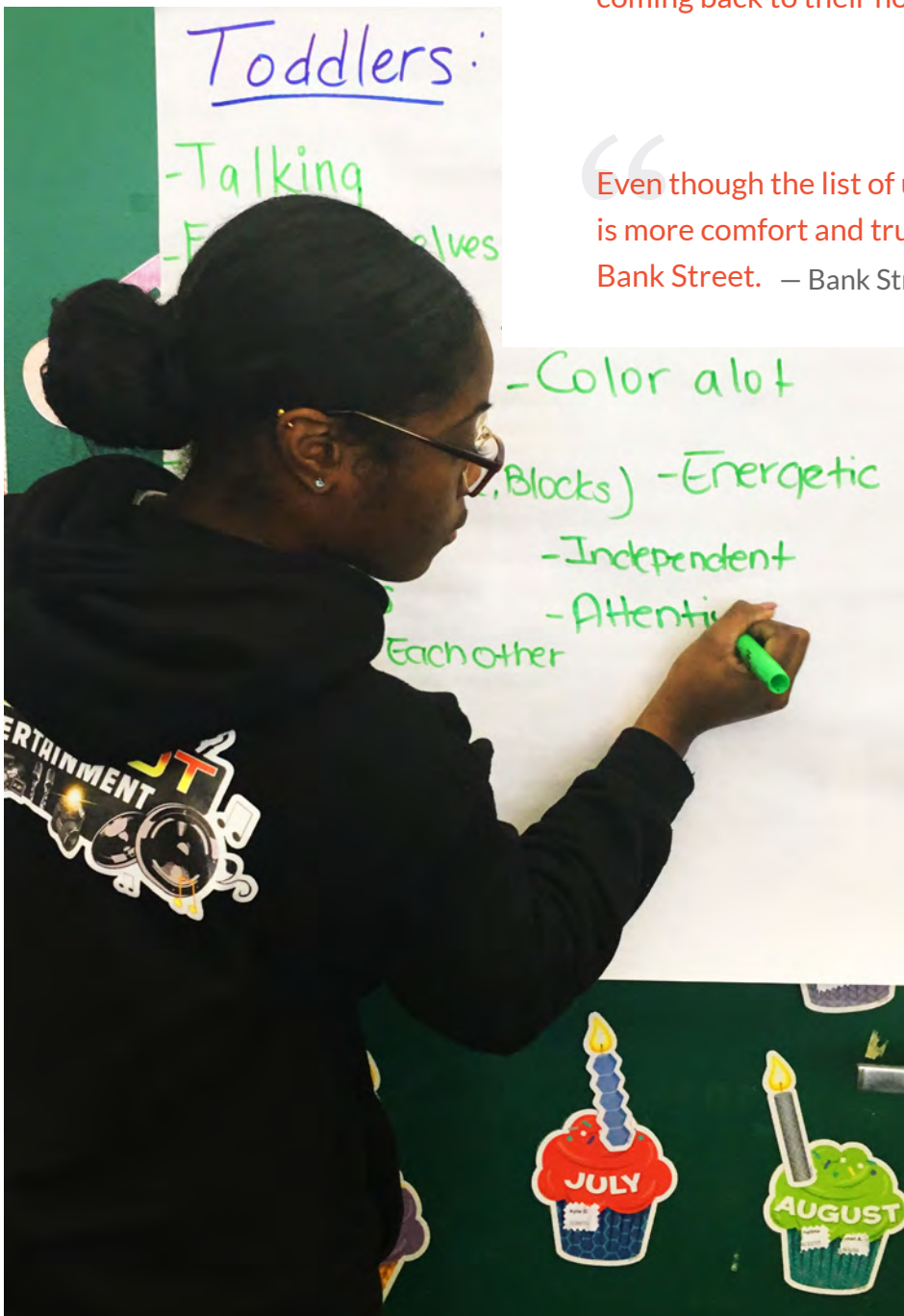
“ We are coming together through the professional development sessions. We feel like we are part of a group now. We are more accepting that change is coming.

– FCC provider

“ Providers have told me they are surprised that I keep coming back to their homes. Trust and respect is growing.

– NYCDOE FCCS manager

“ Even though the list of unknowns remains the same, there is more comfort and trust between providers, DOE, and Bank Street. – Bank Street team member





**AS RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOP, DYNAMICS AND ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING HAVE SHIFTED DURING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS AND COACHING.**

Over time, participants are talking more in small groups at tables and to the whole group. There is more sharing of stories of success and challenges and family and program photographs. More laughter was observed.

“We know each other now. It feels more comfortable and safe here. — FCC provider



**OVER TIME, PARTICIPANTS BEGAN TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO SPEAK OUT ON BEHALF OF FAMILIES.**

“By the time we got to Session 4, some providers pushed back when a participant said something negative about parents. One provider explained a situation from a parents’ perspective. The culture had been created where providers felt comfortable to speak out – instead of waiting for a facilitator. — Bank Street team member

“Parents have stressors, just like we do. We have a father raising three kids on his own since their mother got sick. When he is hurried and abrupt at the end of the day sometimes, I say we have to give him a break. — FCC provider

“I have families who come from homeless shelters and the parents are out looking for a job. If they are late, I still welcome them at the end of the day. Those parents are going through tough times. I make an extra effort to give them extra kindness. — FCC provider



THESE RELATIONSHIPS WERE CREATED DESPITE THE ONGOING TENSION CAUSED BY THE LACK OF CONCRETE INFORMATION ABOUT REIMBURSEMENT AND NEXT STEPS IN THE ACS TO NYCDOE TRANSITION.

“You mean we’re not going to get the same benefits as DOE teachers? I never heard that.

– FCC provider

“There is still so much drama with DOE.... The story keeps changing. At first, they said we can keep all our children but now there is 3-K. What does that mean for me? It makes me wonder if I should stay or go. – FCC provider





## COLLABORATION ACROSS CULTURES AND ROLES IS KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE TRANSITION TO NYCDOE.

Providers and families, Networks, NYCDOE, Bank Street, and AOK each bring their own cultures and community to this effort. With the many differences, all share a goal of providing quality care and education for New York’s young children. Learning about community and culture to assure effectiveness of professional development and coaching sessions requires continued attention and focus.

“It is more than the pedagogy. It is understanding others and their perspectives that is needed to make professional development work.

— Bank Street team member

“Little things like giving people coffee and tea to show respect matter. You have to know the people in a community to know this.

— Bank Street team member

“We have to keep learning about how to do our homework about culture and communities before we go in to do a home visit. It matters because providers make decisions based on their culture, experiences, and upbringing. — NYCDOE FCCS manager



**ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL.**

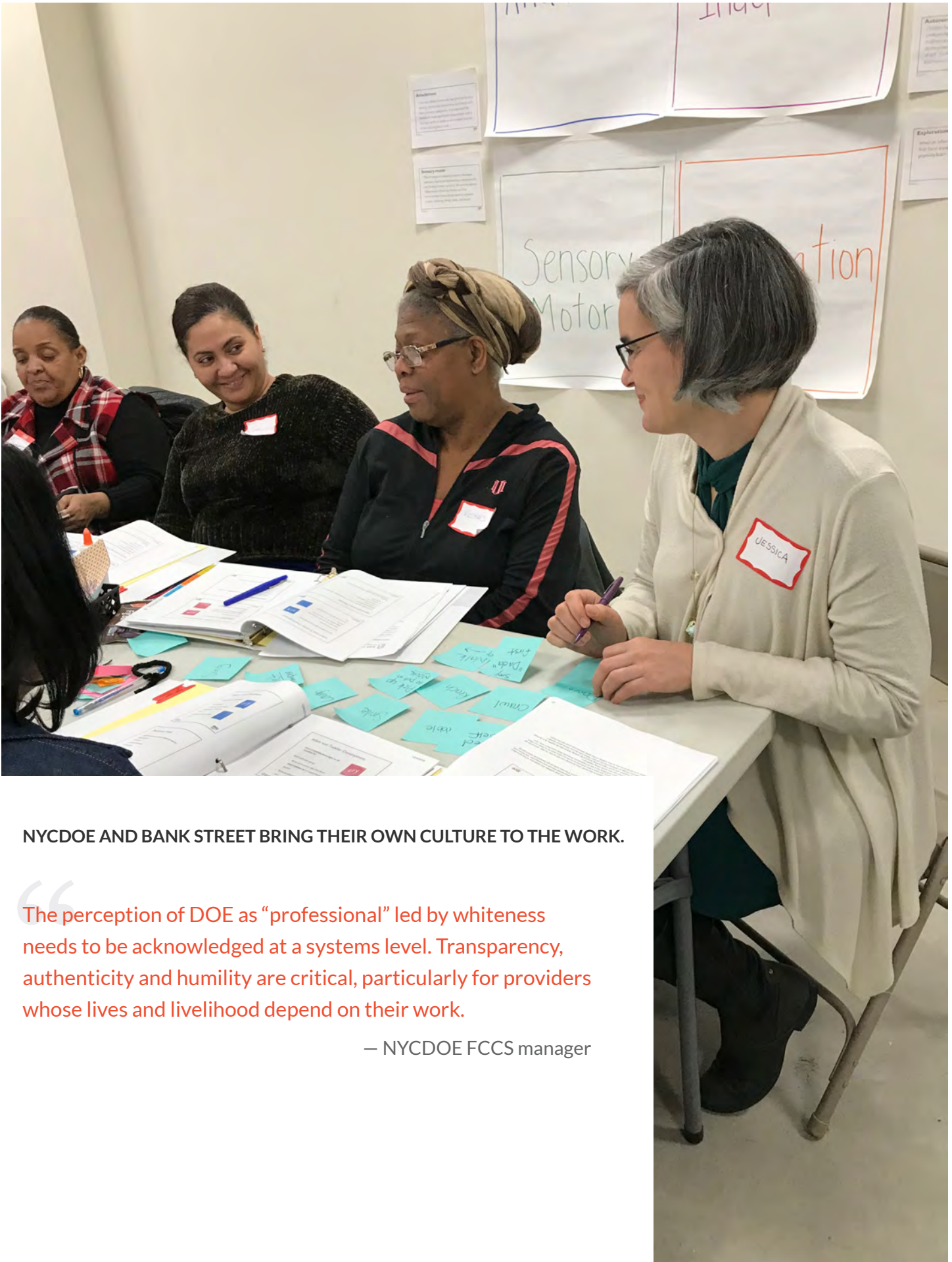
This means ask, not tell. Culture plays a significant part in how people plan curriculum. Goals for children and methodologies may be shaped by culture.

“It would be great to engage in a community assessment process to help us understand who providers are, what they expect and how we can best support them. — Bank Street team member

“It does not work to come in with a list of best practices without recognizing who you are with and where you are. There are providers hiding the fact that kids can read by the age of 3 and throwing “homework” in the closet when being inspected.

— NYCDOE FCCS manager and AOK staff member

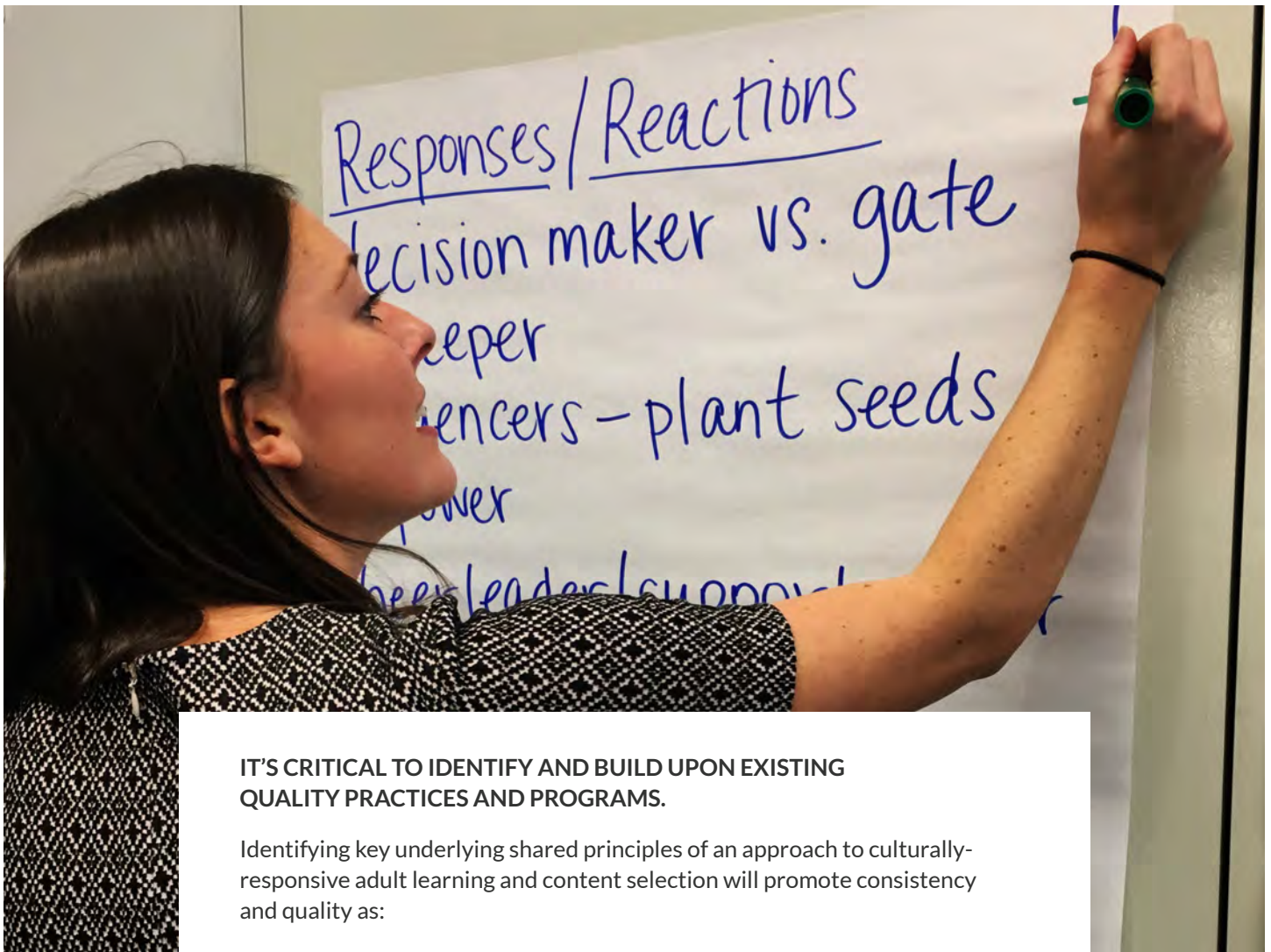




**NYCDOE AND BANK STREET BRING THEIR OWN CULTURE TO THE WORK.**

“The perception of DOE as “professional” led by whiteness needs to be acknowledged at a systems level. Transparency, authenticity and humility are critical, particularly for providers whose lives and livelihood depend on their work.

— NYCDOE FCCS manager



**IT'S CRITICAL TO IDENTIFY AND BUILD UPON EXISTING QUALITY PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS.**

Identifying key underlying shared principles of an approach to culturally-responsive adult learning and content selection will promote consistency and quality as:

- NYCDOE adapts and delivers pilot modules.
- Additional professional development conversations are developed and offered including those around the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Networks choose and offer professional development.

“Does DOE have a booklet to tell us how they want programs to be?” – FCC provider

“We all want to be even better at our jobs and supporting these kids, but we need support. What is DOE looking for? What do they expect?” – FCC provider



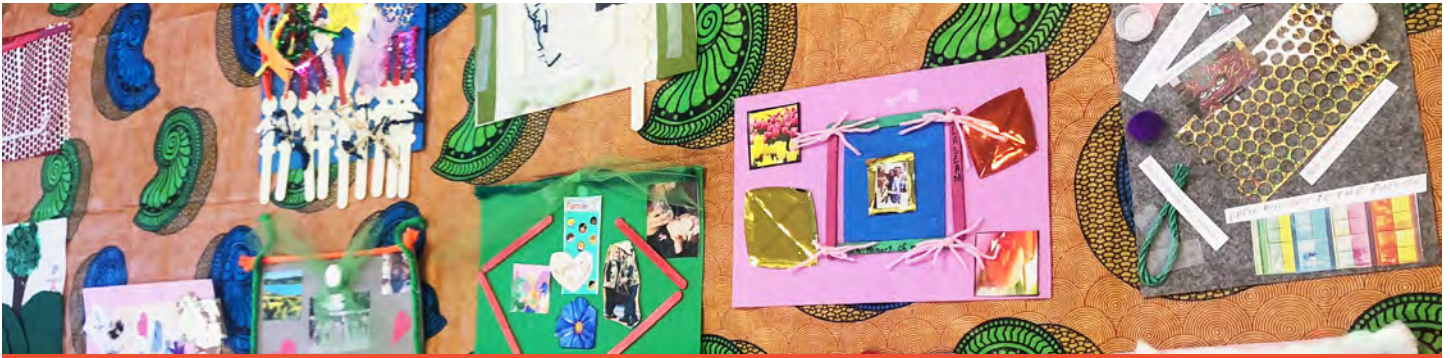
## A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY WILL PROVIDE A FOUNDATION FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT.

At the start of the FCC Pilot, there was pushback during professional development sessions from providers who felt that their programs were being criticized when NYCDOE talked about enhancing quality. Over time, as trust developed, providers began asking for guidance around quality. Identifying and documenting family child care settings that demonstrate exemplary practice will support efforts to enhance quality including the development of research-based curriculum materials for the New York City provider community.

These sites and examples can be used to:

- Highlight the richness of a home setting as a learning environment
- Affirm quality practices. (As seen in the quote below, providers may not always be aware of quality practices they do each day)
- Enrich professional development conversations including CDA sessions
- Personalize a research-based vision/guide to quality for New York City providers

“When I did “Where is Thumbkin,” the NYCDOE Coach said “That was really good because you tell children to get up and to find their name on the door. You are helping children learn to recognize and read letters. You are teaching literacy.” Little things that we didn’t think were much of anything help children learn. – FCC provider



## AT FOCUS GROUPS, PROVIDERS ARTICULATED QUALITY PRACTICES.

“Some kids don’t like to have their diaper changed, but I am able to integrate communication into that routine. I have words on the wall and books. And we talk and talk. And before you know it, that diaper is changed. — FCC provider

“When they come in the morning they put their things in their place on the shelf. I show them their name - that’s the beginning of reading. We take a letter from the name like “O” and talk about “O” all day long. — FCC provider

“I want children to begin to learn to share. Even if you have 20 of the same toy, if a child wants what another child wants, they will take it. I model that children can work things out. I explain, “You don’t have to take it... you can ask if you can play with her.” “That was nice to share with your friend.” — FCC provider

“If you give a child a blank sheet of paper and a box of crayons, the child will start to draw what they are seeing or thinking. But if I give the child a picture of a bird they will only draw a bird. — FCC provider

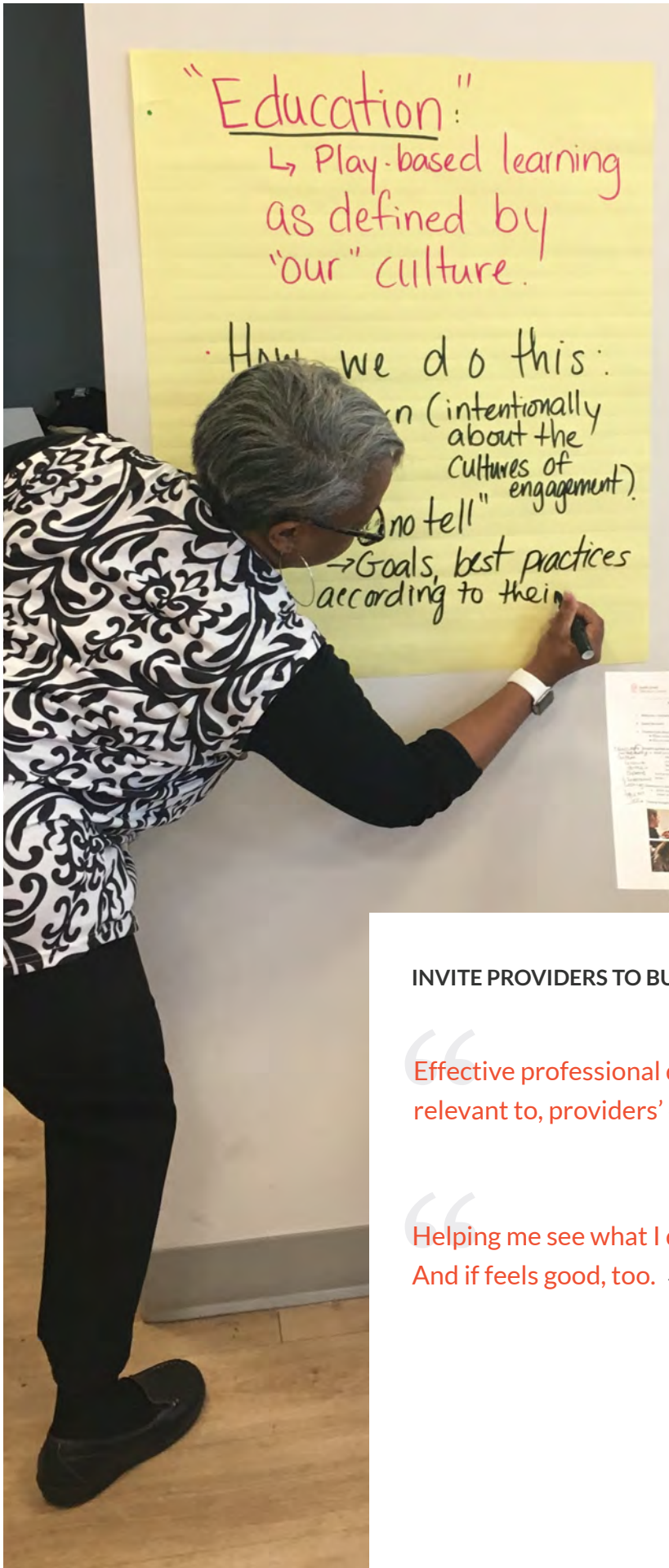
**PART THREE:  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
LESSONS LEARNED**

## PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LESSONS LEARNED

Integrating insights and lessons learned from the FCC Pilot can strengthen future professional development sessions by NYCDOE and its partners. These findings can also guide work with Networks to enhance the professional development offered to providers in their respective communities. These findings can also guide work with Networks to enhance the professional development offered to providers in their respective communities.

“Family child care professional development in this city has ranged from very good to very poor. This is a chance to get it right. – Bank Street team member

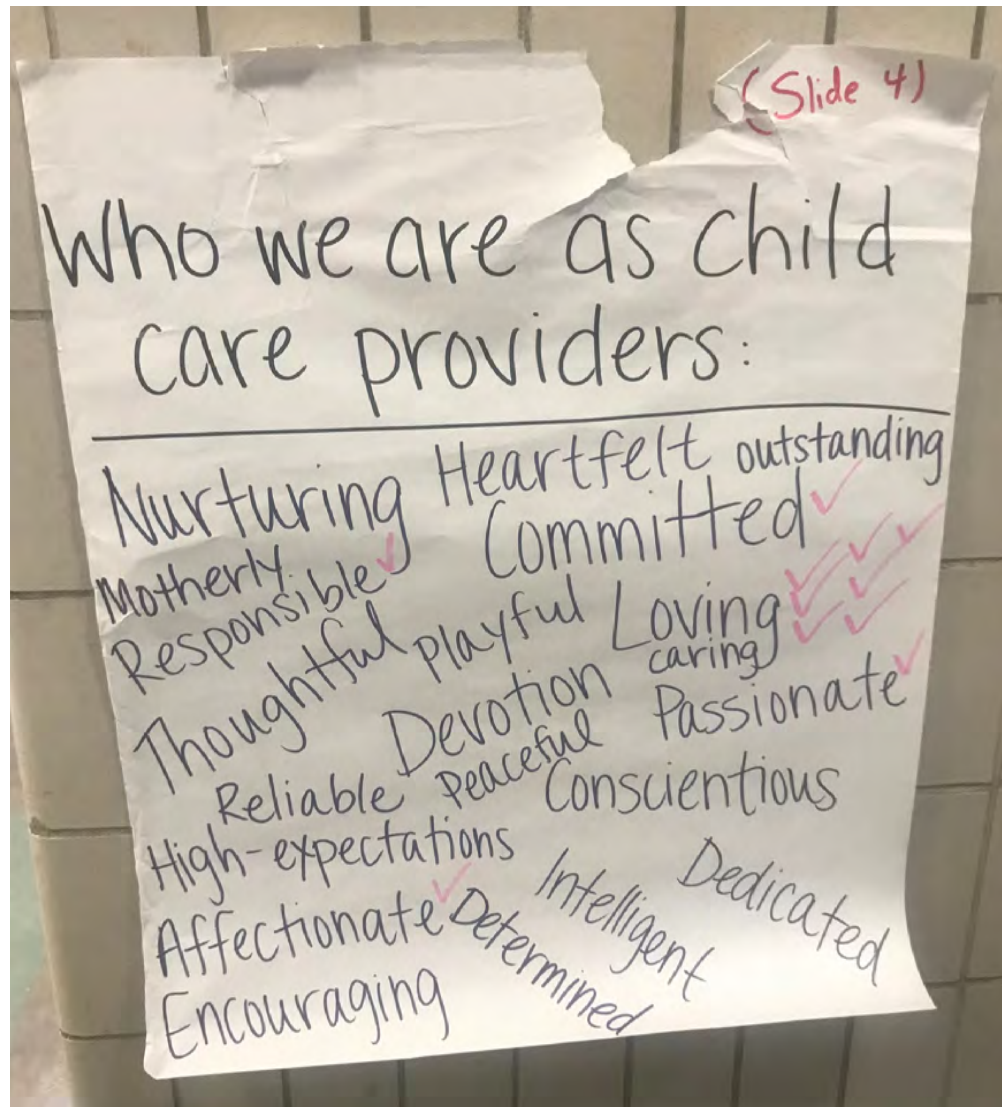




**INVITE PROVIDERS TO BUILD UPON EXISTING STRENGTHS.**

“Effective professional development supports, reflects, and is relevant to, providers’ daily practice. — Bank Street team member

“Helping me see what I do well helps me do it more often. And if feels good, too. — FCC provider



**PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AROUND BUSINESS PRACTICES.**

“ We need support to develop business skills. To know how to run the business: taxes, expenses, receipts, taxes... We have to know where every penny, nickel, and dime go. — FCC provider

“ Providers cannot make a living wage. Some are closing their programs. Providers need more training and more support in business practices. We need to learn more about the prevalence of this issue across the city. — NYCDOE FCCS manager

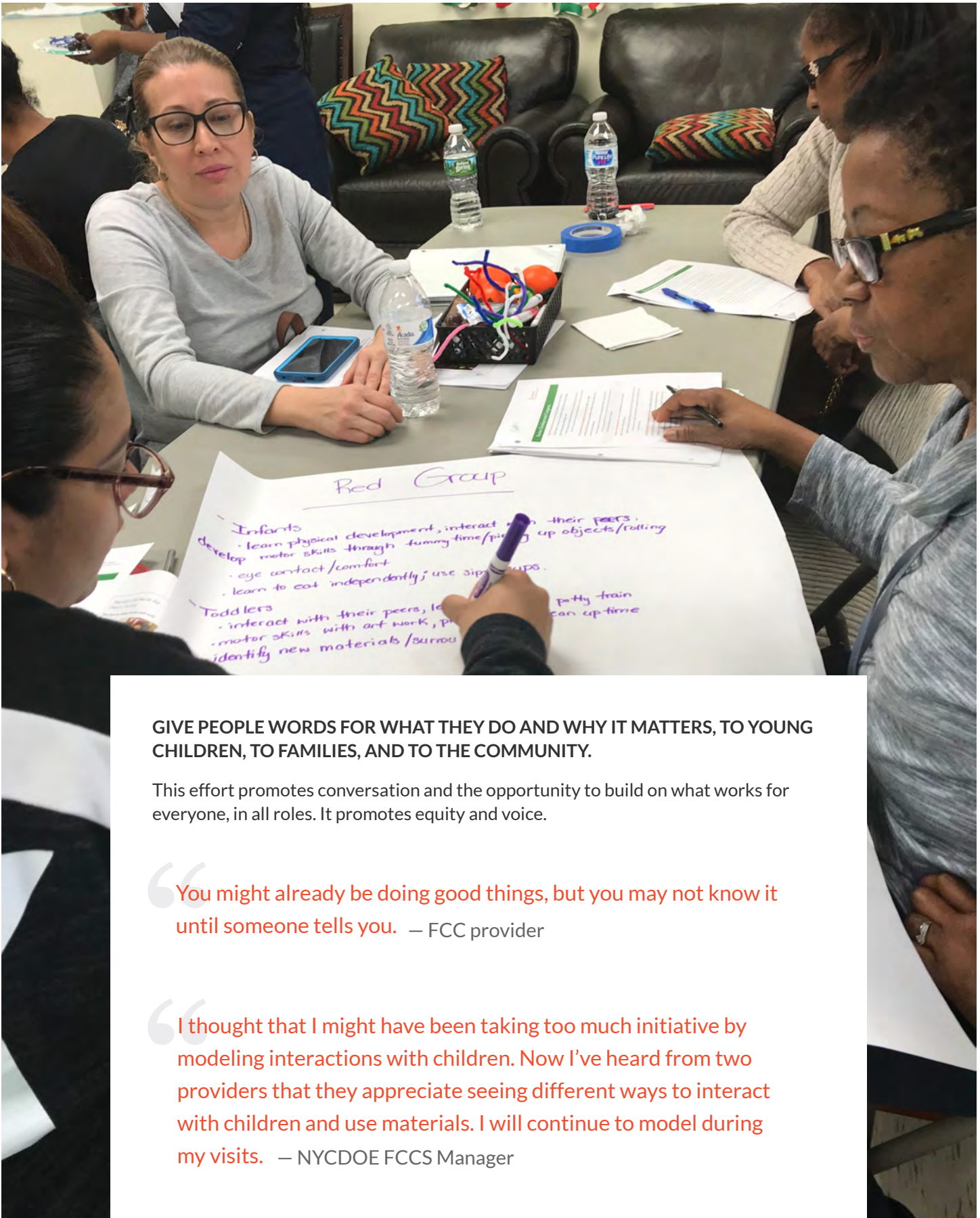




**INCREASE COACHING OPPORTUNITIES. COACHING IS VIEWED AS VALUABLE.**

“Coaching is needed. Step by step. To bring your quality up. Coaching helps you keep doing what works and to do it even better. If you want to change something, your coach can help you. If you never change, you’ll always do the same thing. – FCC provider

“I saw what my coach was doing when she helped children put blocks away. She talked about shapes and sizes. I said to myself, “I’m going to use that.” Now I am going to keep watching so I can use some of her ideas. – FCC provider



**GIVE PEOPLE WORDS FOR WHAT THEY DO AND WHY IT MATTERS, TO YOUNG CHILDREN, TO FAMILIES, AND TO THE COMMUNITY.**

This effort promotes conversation and the opportunity to build on what works for everyone, in all roles. It promotes equity and voice.

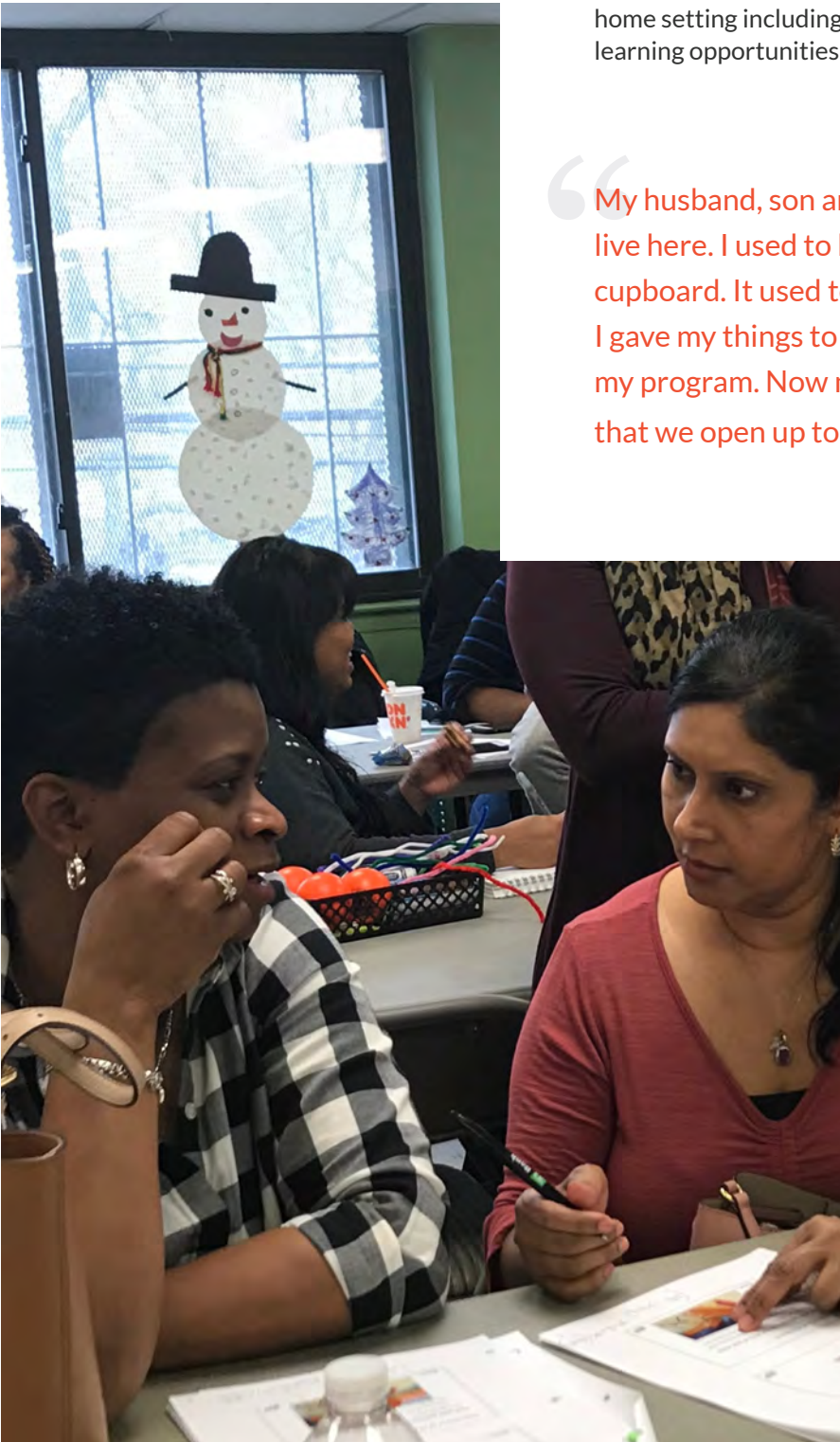
“You might already be doing good things, but you may not know it until someone tells you. — FCC provider

“I thought that I might have been taking too much initiative by modeling interactions with children. Now I’ve heard from two providers that they appreciate seeing different ways to interact with children and use materials. I will continue to model during my visits. — NYCDOE FCCS Manager

## SUPPORT PROVIDERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BEING IN A HOME SETTING.

In striving for quality and legitimacy, many providers have turned their home settings into “mini-centers,” yet the home setting including its daily routines provides rich learning opportunities.

“My husband, son and granddaughter and I live here. I used to have big tables and a china cupboard. It used to look like a real house. Then I gave my things to the neighbor when I opened my program. Now my family has a little table that we open up to eat on.” — FCC provider





**BE MORE TRANSPARENT AND ARTICULATE THE REASONING BEHIND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES AND ACTIVITIES.**

“Moving forward, it can support providers’ learning and deepen their understanding about how children learn if we articulate why we do what we do during professional development. For example, “We are giving you a break so you can get up and move, talk with colleagues and take a breath. Moving supports thinking, focus and learning – of adults and children.”

– Bank Street team member



**BE INTENTIONAL AS WE MODEL AND GIVE PEOPLE THE CHANCE TO PRACTICE INTROSPECTION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE.**

“We assume that people can do this. But many providers haven’t had the opportunity to practice reflection in professional development experiences.”

— Bank Street team member



**WELCOME MALE PROVIDERS. INCLUDE THEM IN EXAMPLES AND STORIES.**

“My husband is my assistant. Children call him, “Papi” (dad). When they arrive, they look for him, not me. It’s very special. Some say, “I don’t have a father at home, but I have my Papi.” They are learning what a good man is like.

— FCC provider





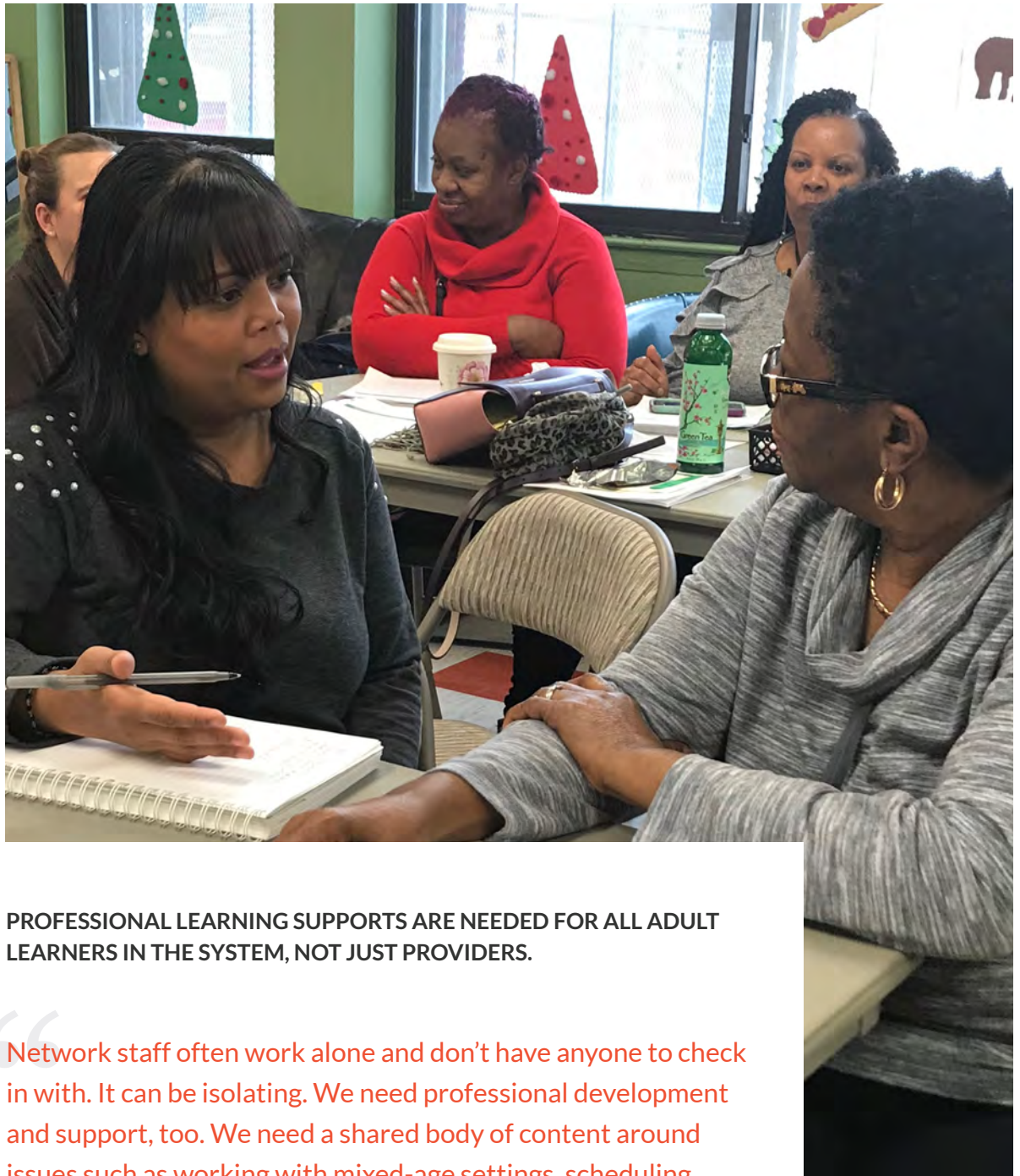
### **BUILD CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PROVIDERS.**

Many providers express a desire to have more connection with other providers.

“This pilot program is bringing us together. There was a new provider here today. I would not have met her if we weren’t coming together.

– FCC provider

“We used to have a day when we would go to other providers’ homes for 30 min so we could see other programs. We might each visit five programs and then at the last one stay and have a big BBQ. It gave us a chance to get to know and learn from each other. – FCC provider



**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED FOR ALL ADULT LEARNERS IN THE SYSTEM, NOT JUST PROVIDERS.**

“Network staff often work alone and don’t have anyone to check in with. It can be isolating. We need professional development and support, too. We need a shared body of content around issues such as working with mixed-age settings, scheduling, supporting providers to teach their assistants. — Network leader

“It is good to have the time to pause, think, and talk together.

— Bank Street team member



**PART FOUR:  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND CLOSING THOUGHTS**

## PART FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Based on the themes emerging from this documentation effort, we propose the following recommendations to inform the family child care work moving forward:

### CONTINUE TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

- Ensure providers and Network voices have a place at the table to be part of conversations and inform decisions that will shape the transition. Empower existing and future leaders in the provider community.

### CONTINUE TO DEEPEN THE UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY CHILD CARE

- Continue to build and deepen respectful, trusting relationships by enhancing and implementing strategies to learn with and about the community and culture(s) of networks, providers and families served.

### BUILD ON STRENGTHS TO ENHANCE QUALITY

- Provide learning supports for all adult learners in the system (i.e., Network leaders, Network staff, DOE central team members), not just providers. This will involve identifying key messages and content for all. Additionally, it will be important to provide opportunities for professional learning conversations across roles.
- Create a structure and needed resources to support provider-run local associations or learning communities in which providers will have the opportunity to network with and learn from each other regularly. This should be done in close collaboration with providers and Network staff.
- Create a lessons learned guide about providing effective professional development conversations to support FCC providers for use by DOE and its partners in working with Networks. Articulating and integrating insights and lessons learned from the pilot will strengthen future professional development efforts.
- Gather stories and photos of settings and interactions that model exemplary practice. Then incorporate these stories and photos into a research-based, customized-for-NYC, professional development guide to help create a shared vocabulary and understanding of quality practice in a home setting.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS



This photo of a group of AKA providers and the quilt they created reflect shifts that occurred as trust and relationships grew at all sites during the pilot. As providers explained, “It feels more safe and comfortable here. We are part of something bigger now.”

At the first professional development session, each provider made a quilt square reflecting their values, culture, and program. As the squares were collected, many asked, “When will I get my square back?” Facilitators assured them that the squares would be returned during the final session. In the meantime, the quilt would hang on the wall of the Network professional development room where providers would meet during the FCC Pilot.

Months later, as facilitators prepared to return the squares, group members decided they wanted to donate their squares and the quilt to AKA so that it could remain on the wall for others to notice enjoy. Providers’ proudly took photos of their quilt, then joined together to stand in front of it for a group photo.

Over time, as relationships with NYCDOE, partners, and each other developed, providers’ became more comfortable with sharing stories, ideas, challenges, and questions—as well as quilt squares. These relationships and the interactions they make possible reflect a partnership that is key a key step forward as NYCDOE continues to partner with providers on behalf of New York City’s youngest children and their families.

The NYCDOE is committed to extending high-quality care and education to all children from birth to age 5. Achieving this goal at scale will depend on a vision grounded in child development, family engagement, strong community engagement and real partnerships with family child care providers, as well as a robust set of supports for providers with a range of experiences. Moving forward, the intentional collaboration between NYCDOE and the family child care provider community (including Network staff) needs to continue and deepen to assure the success of the transition. Ultimately, this partnership will touch the lives of the many New York City young children and families who rely on family child care. Building relationships, listening to and amplifying voices, and engaging in reflective practice will continue to be critical parts of the work.

## APPENDIX: DOCUMENTATION SOURCES

The content of this report comes from the following sources:

- Observations and conversations with family child care providers and NYCDOE team members at professional development sessions between November 2018 and May 2019 at All My Children, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and Shalom. Two visits were made to each site. One in the fall and one in the spring
- Three focus groups conducted during lunchtime at each professional development event. These groups included 5-10 providers each and lasted approximately 50 minutes
- One-on-one phone conversations with three providers
- Visits to three providers' homes
- Meetings. Documentation findings were shared and discussed at the following meetings:
  - NYCDOE Family Child Care Support (FCCS) team members
  - Bank Street's Professional Development team
  - Network members at a monthly meeting (Network leaders, members from the Bank Street team, NYCDOE FCCS managers, and members from the All Our Kin Team)
  - Following each event, notes from the meetings illustrated with photographs from the day were then sent to participants to invite reflection and ongoing conversation.