



## Liftoff WNY Network News Spring 2021

### A Word from the Director

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate spring's arrival, let us renew our commitment to the young children in our region, particularly those deeply impacted by COVID-19. Let us embrace the growth of new ideas and innovative approaches to our communities most challenging problems. Let's consider a "new future" over a "new normal" – a future that consistently puts kids first. I look forward to our collective work and aligned action in the months to come!

Thank you for leadership and support of Liftoff WNY. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or opportunities for greater connection and partnership.

My best,

*Rachel*



[Visit our Website](#)

### Aligned Action: Fund Preschool Special Education!

In a letter signed by Liftoff WNY and 90 organizations across the state, the Kids Can't Wait campaign strongly urged Governor Cuomo to adopt the State Education Department's recommendation to increase funding for preschool special education programs. There is a long-standing history of inadequate growth in tuition rates that has forced providers to cut costs or close programs, accelerated the shortage of services and denied young children with developmental delays and disabilities their right to a free appropriate public education.

[Read More](#)

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## State Budget Fails to Support Young Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities

The Statewide Kids Can't Wait campaign expressed disappointment in the lack of funding for Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education programs. This budget ignores the urgent needs facing infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with developmental delays and disabilities, and New York's families will suffer as a result. Click the button below to read the full statement.

[Read More](#)

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## Child Care Wins Big in New York State Budget

Liftoff WNY joined with hundreds of advocates of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care and Winning Beginning NY to push for investments in early care and education in the FY 2021-2022 Budget. We are thrilled to announce the New York State Legislature and Governor Cuomo have made use of Federal funding from the American Rescue plan and previous rounds of stimulus dollars, as well as a tax increase on the highest income New Yorkers. This will expand access to child care subsidies, decrease the costs for child care for parents, expand Universal Pre-Kindergarten and equalize subsidy eligibility requirements throughout the State.

[Read More](#)

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## Help Me Grow WNY Announces Partnership with Liftoff

Help Me Grow Western New York has been engaged in a strategic planning process since 2020. While COVID-19 slowed down the process a bit, HMGWNY is making final additions to the plan and is eager to share its progress in the coming months.

One bit of exciting news is Liftoff's upcoming involvement with HMGWNY - which will now be supported by both CCNY and Liftoff WNY. Liftoff will provide strategic leadership and policy guidance to HMG, while CCNY will provide systems data leadership. How will this happen? As an aligned action network, Liftoff will advocate for system changes (policies, resources, practices) by engaging with early childhood coalitions and intermediary organizations, schools, healthcare and public health professionals, and others so that WNY has a more responsive, coordinated, and integrated early childhood system. CCNY and Liftoff will work collaboratively to define the types of data and data reports to inform the system and inform advocacy/policy priorities.

**Please stay tuned over the next few months with updates and opportunities for connection.**

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## Liftoff News & Events

[Lunch and Learn](#)

## Liftoff WNY Lunch and Learn Tuesday, May 25th, 12-1PM

In 2018, Governor Cuomo assembled a Task Force of experts to develop innovative solutions to improve access to quality, affordable child care in NY. This month the Task Force's recommendations were released: *Supporting Families, Employers & New York's Future Report: An Action Plan for a Strong and Equitable Child Care System.*



**Sheri L. Scavone**  
Executive Director,  
WNY Women's  
Foundation



**Beth Starks**  
Executive Director,  
Chautauqua Lake  
Child Care Center



**Larry Marx**  
CEO, The Children's  
Agenda

On May 25th, Liftoff hosted a Lunch and Learn to discuss the recommendations of the NYS Child Care Availability Task Force. We were joined by Sheri L. Scavone, Beth Starks and Larry Marx for this special event.

To view the slides from the presentation and read more about the recommendations: [Click Here](#)

**Save the Date:** Our next Lunch and Learn event will be this summer on August 10th!

Please join Liftoff WNY for an hour of learning and conversation with Child Care Availability Task Force members. Our guest presenters will spotlight the recommendations to create a child care system that is more affordable, accessible, high-quality, and coordinated.

### Our Mission:

Liftoff promotes and enhances high-quality early childhood development for all children by integrating practice, policy, research and resources.

Website:  
[Liftoffwny.org](http://Liftoffwny.org)

Contact with any questions:  
[Amy@liftoffwny.org](mailto:Amy@liftoffwny.org)



## Introducing Liftoff WNY Communications and Administrative Associate Amy Miranti

We are pleased to announce that Amy Miranti has joined Liftoff as our Communications and Administrative Associate! Amy is responsible for a combination of day-to-day operations, technology, and communication tasks for our initiative. We are thrilled to have Amy home in on our communications plans and strategies and serve as our administrative liaison to our Steering Committees and community partners. Amy is a graduate of SUNY Geneseo with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Spanish. Prior Liftoff WNY, Amy served as a marketing and social media consultant for Arkatecht and Dancing with ED. In addition to Amy's professional experience, she brings a deep commitment to community through her volunteer work with Help For Parents Network, Inc., as a Crisis Text Line Counselor, and as a volunteer with Blythedale Children's Hospital.