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## A community conversation: "Improving early outcomes for WNY's youngest children"



On September 27, 2023, partners from Buffalo State University, [The Children's Guild Foundation](#) and Liftoff WNY convened early childhood special education experts and practitioners at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site. This session was held to hear from key stakeholders to better understand what is working in the early childhood system and brainstorm better ways to overcome obstacles. The session began with a presentation from Liftoff Director, Rachel Bonsignore. Following the keynote, attendees broke out into small groups for discussion. The collective feedback from this event will help inform a regional policy and systems change agenda to be championed by Liftoff WNY. There was great conversation in the groups that led to interest in future convenings. Liftoff would like to give a special thank you to Cathy Gura and [Kathy Doody](#) (pictured above with Rachel Bonsignore) for all their wonderful partnership in bringing this event together.

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### Aligned Action: Kids Can't Wait



Currently, a significant percentage of families in New York face unacceptable delays in receiving Early Intervention services. Shockingly, about half of New York families must wait longer than the legal 30-day deadline for these services to commence. This is an issue that disproportionately affects Black and Hispanic families, perpetuating disparities and inequalities within our communities.

**Kid's can't wait for Early Intervention. [Take action now!](#)**

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## Profiles in Doing Good



Meet Kate Coffman, the amazing director of [Rooted Beginnings](#) and Co-Founder of the [Neurodiversity Network of WNY](#). Kate is an incredible advocate and her efforts remind us of the beauty in embracing joy, the power of play, and the strength found in meaningful connections. Let's celebrate Kate and all the remarkable individuals like her who make a difference every day for young children and families. Watch Kate's interview and testimonial why #KidsCantWait below.

[Full Story](#)

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## Liftoff on the Road!



Liftoff has had a busy fall on the road for different learning and network opportunities. In September, Liftoff headed to Atlanta, Georgia for the Communications Network #ComNet23 conference. This conference brings together innovators, thought leaders and communications professionals from across the country that all share a common goal of creating communications for good. The three-day conference fostered a dynamic exchange of ideas and insights, emphasizing the pivotal role of communications in an ever-evolving world. Keynote speakers, including pioneers from academia and industry, shed light on topics ranging from AI-powered content creation to ethical considerations in digital storytelling. ComNet23 created a space for networking and collaboration, leaving attendees inspired with the tools to make change for good! (Pictured above the Liftoff team and Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation colleagues).

This month, The New York Funders Alliance, Liftoff's fiscal sponsor, held their annual NYS Funders Conference in Syracuse. The in-person conference brought together funders from across the state for a great time of learning and connecting with many of our Liftoff leaders and Funders Alliance partners. Liftoff is the only early childhood funder collaborative in New York State and is the newest member of the [Early Childhood Funders Collaborative](#), an organization that has brought funders together to learn, connect, and advocate for change for children and families for over thirty years. (Pictured below the team in charge of the "behind the scenes" at the conference).





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