



Liftoff WNY | Year in Review | 2023

A letter from Liftoff WNY's Director



Dear Liftoff Partners,

As we wrap up an eventful and momentous year, I am thrilled to share the incredible strides and collective accomplishments that have defined Liftoff's journey in 2023. Together, we continued to lay the groundwork for transformative early childhood systems change across Western New York.

Our push for better public policies for young children and their families gained some serious strength in 2023. Through concerted efforts, we fostered relationships with over 100 leaders and key policy influencers in our region, spanning philanthropic, governmental, academic, health, and community sectors. This collaborative network has been instrumental in building support for critical changes in Early Intervention and child care, and the expansion of Help Me Grow at both the state and local levels.

In 2023, Liftoff remained dedicated to sparking change by sharing vital data, impactful programs, and early childhood initiatives across our social media channels and signature 'Learning Network' events. Our Lunch & Learn virtual sessions, Impact webinars, and in-person gatherings weren't just gatherings – they were critical opportunities to raise awareness and mobilize action. With over 300 attendees from Western New York and beyond, these events ignited meaningful conversations, shared invaluable insights, and inspired concrete actions toward our collective early childhood goals.

I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude to each member of Liftoff for your unwavering dedication, passion, and collaborative spirit. Together, we've propelled our shared mission forward. Here's to another year of aligned action and transformative progress!

Warmest regards,

Rachel P. Bonsignore

Aligned Action for Young Children



This year's aligned advocacy efforts centered on mobilizing impactful action for a more inclusive, responsive, and equitable early childhood system. Through our active participation in three advocacy campaigns, including a successful drive to secure state-level funding for Help Me Grow, our impact resonated. As a longstanding leadership partner in coalitions such as the Kids Can't Wait Coalition, we championed legislative and budgetary proposals, amplifying parent and community voice for crucial improvements to NYS's Early Intervention program. Liff Off WNY also championed the priorities of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, reflecting our collective commitment to equitable access to high quality child care, ensuring all children have access to affordable and available high-quality early care and learning. [Read more...](#)

Liff Off's Learning Network: '23 Summer Series

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMER LEARNING SERIES

Liff Off WNY is pleased to present our virtual 2023 Summer Learning Series. Each presentation will feature award-winning data and research, equity and community change efforts for young children, and actionable takeaways.

Thursday, June 15th at Noon
Ensuring Bright Smiles: The State of Early Childhood Oral Health in WNY

Wednesday, July 12th at Noon
A Closer Look: An exploration of Help Me Grow WNY's data dashboard

[Register Now](#)

Liff Off WNY
www.liffoffwny.org

In the Summer of 2023, Liff Off launched its first ever Summer Learning Series, a virtual opportunity to gather our network to focus on important topics in the early childhood sector. Participants joined from across the WNY region to learn from experts in their field while also having discussion time to dig deeper into the topics. Liff Off would like to thank our speakers, Briget Walsh, Senior Policy Analyst for Health and Public Health at the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, Emily Oaks, Lead Data Strategist at CCNY, Inc. and Jeff Smink, Deputy Director of Ed Trust NY.

If you were unable to attend our sessions, please follow the links below to the session recording. Be sure to follow us on our social media platforms to stay up to date on any future learning network events.

Session 1: ["Ensuring Bright Smiles: The State of Early Childhood Oral Health in WNY"](#)

Session 2: ["A Closer Look: An Exploration of Help Me Grow WNY's Data Dashboard"](#)

Session 3: ["State of Early Literacy in New York"](#)

Improving Early Outcomes for WNY's Youngest Children: Early Childhood Convenings



In the Fall of 2023, Lifford partnered with Buffalo State University and The Children's Guild Foundation to gather a group of early childhood experts to discuss ways in which the sector can collaborate to improve early outcomes for WNY's children. These convenings were a great time of discussion and networking. The collective feedback and insight shared during these sessions will help inform regional policy and systems change agenda directly. This agenda not only represents our collective experience but will be a rallying point for our community that will allow us to align ourselves towards actionable steps to enact meaningful change.

A special thank you to Cathie Gura of The Children's Foundation and Dr. Kathy Doody of Buffalo State University for collaborating on such an exciting event.

Interested in advocating for children across the region? Join Lifford and The Children's Agenda on February 13th for the Kids Can't Wait Advocacy Day in Albany.

[Register Today](#)



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