

For Immediate Release

***Blueprint for Investing in Girls Age 0-8, A New Study from The New York Women's Foundation, Projects Precarious Situation for Young Girls Dependent on Struggling Caregivers
Report finds that tens of thousands of low-income girls in NYC lack strong, consistent nurturance from well-supported and well-prepared adults***

New York (November 29, 2016) – According to the [Blueprint for Investing in Girls Age 0-8](#) a new report from [The New York Women's Foundation](#), during these critical years, tens of thousands of low-income girls in New York City (NYC) lack strong, consistent nurturance from well-supported and well-prepared adults. The first eight years of a girl's life comprise a period of both unique vulnerability and unparalleled cognitive, physical and social-emotional development. At no other time is the trajectory of childhood development so closely linked to the well-being of caregivers, who also serve as role models during this critical life stage. Right now, as many as 40% of the 450,000 girls under the age of eight in New York City live in poverty. Three-quarters of them live in communities of color or immigrant communities. By age of eight, a solid segment of black and Latina girls enter what may be lifelong struggles against malnutrition, obesity or asthma. The Foundation's study, prepared by **Susan Leicher** of Thompson & Columbus, Inc. and based on the input of experts in the fields of early childhood development, early childhood education, and maternal and infant health, projects that without significant intervention on their caregivers' behalf, the situation could be precarious for this generation of low-income young girls, whose caregivers are struggling. Among the report's findings:

- Low-income mothers in NYC have highly-limited access to the basic guidance, support, respite and childcare resources needed to be effective nurturers and first teachers.
- Low-income women of color are overwhelmingly both the main/sole wage earners and the main/sole caregivers for their families.
- Low-wage working women overwhelmingly hold service and retail jobs characterized by minimal pay scales, erratic hours and total lack of flexibility.
- Workers staffing NYC's subsidized childcare programs are predominantly women of color earning salaries that put them barely over the poverty line.
- Informal caregivers – often the only available to low-income mothers -- have limited access to ongoing training, support, feedback and supervision that their work merits and requires.

Ana Oliveira, President & CEO of The New York Women’s Foundation said, “We see young girls who start off with so much promise, but they are challenged from the start by difficult circumstances. If we invest in the lives and communities of the low-income women of color who raise them, we can give young girls a chance to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and reach their immense potential.” The report offers a roadmap, noting that “the best way to better support NYC’s low-income young girls is to better support the low-income women who hold those girls’ futures in their hands.”

Specific recommendations for the public and philanthropic/non-profit sectors include:

- Rigorously monitor and enforce the Paid Family Leave Act and pass additional legislative measures to enable working parents to provide adequate care for their young children.
- Increase support for family child care providers by increasing funding for the organizations assigned to and capable of providing that assistance.
- Expand New York City’s Child Care Tax Credit eligibility criteria to reach families making up to \$65,000 a year.
- Continue, expand, and rigorously evaluate the City’s First Readers program, Head Start and other similar early education/parenting services for low-income parents.
- Seek out, convene and bring together other nonprofits serving immigrant and other low-income communities with local schools and childcare centers to create early education programs that support parents as first teachers.

The report found that workable solutions and areas of progress exist, singling out **The Nurse-Practitioner Partnership** and **Healthy Families** programs – which offer up to two years of intense, culturally-appropriate in-home guidance and support to the city’s youngest and most vulnerable mothers; service agencies such as **Committee for Hispanic Children and Families**, **Day Care Council of New York**, **Chinese Planning Council**, **WHEDco** and the **Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium (CCRC)** that are working to improve and extend low-wage families’ access to high-quality affordable childcare and provide robust training and supports to formal and informal childcare providers; and advocacy organizations such as **A Better Balance** that are seeking fairer and more viable employment practices and conditions for working parents.

[About The New York Women’s Foundation](#)

The New York Women’s Foundation creates an equitable and just future for women and families by uniting a cross-cultural alliance that ignites action and invests in bold, community-led solutions across the city. The “[Blueprint for Investing in Women](#)” series explores the position, needs, and strategies for supporting the

security and contributions of low-income NYC women during one of four major developmental periods (ages 0-8, 9-24, 25-29, and 60+). Prior reports covered ages 9-24 and women over age 60.

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