

New York, invest in young children

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Your June 19 editorial, "Still failing after all these years," rightly focuses on the preschool years as a key to increasing high school graduation rates.

In fact, according to the [Center on the Developing Child](#) at [Harvard University](#), 90 percent of children's brain growth occurs before age 5.

By taking advantage of this important development opportunity, children are more likely to be prepared for learning when they start school and therefore more likely to succeed and graduate on time.

Early childhood programs are a good investment. When children succeed in school, they succeed in life and don't require expensive social programs as adults. They are more likely to be employed and engaged citizens.

Fortunately, a dedicated group of New Yorkers has been working diligently for several years to design an initiative that has the potential to improve young children's early learning by improving all kinds of programs in centers, schools and homes that children attend before kindergarten. QUALITYstarsNY has been field-tested recently in a dozen communities across the state, including in Albany County.

QUALITYstarsNY offers a clear, organized way to assess, improve and communicate the quality of New York's early care and education programs to families choosing programs for their children. Programs can earn ratings of one to five stars. Support will be available to help programs improve and star ratings will be easily accessible to families (<http://www.qualitystarsny.org>).

We can close the achievement gap at kindergarten entry and reap the rewards of near-universal graduation rates, if New York is willing to invest in young children.

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Climax