



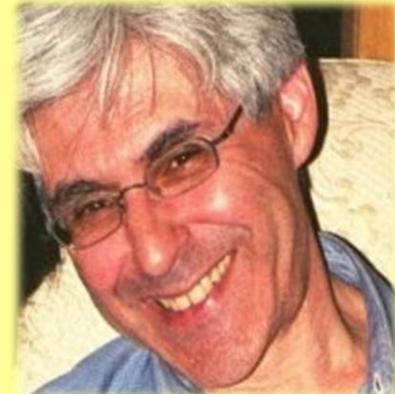
Working to support and nurture the rights and needs of young children

Working to support and nurture the rights and needs of young children

# **A BRIEF LOOK AT DEFENDING THE EARLY YEARS 2012-PRESENT**

In the wake of the “new wave of standards and testing about to wash over preschools,” in January, 2012, nationally-known early childhood advocates **Dr. Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Dr. Diane Levin,** and **Dr. Ed Miller** declare that **“Enough is enough!”**

They launch an initiative to be known as **Defending the Early Years.**



On April 4, 2012, 17 distinguished nationally and internationally-known early childhood experts come together at the **First National Advisory Board meeting**, held in New York. Participants include:

- Indira Blackwood
- Nancy Carlsson-Paige
- Sherry Cleary
- Linda Darling-Hammond
- Stephanie Feeney
- Ayla Gavins
- Constance Kamii
- Lilian Katz
- Diane Levin
- Joan Lombardi
- Deborah Meier
- Ed Miller
- Fretta Reitzes
- Tracey Scronic
- Maurice Sykes
- Valora Washington
- Sara Wilford

# This distinguished group decide that DEY's **primary goals** are:

- To mobilize the early childhood community to speak out with **well-reasoned arguments** against inappropriate standards, assessments, and classroom practices.
- To track the **effects of new standards**, especially those linked to the Common Core State Standards, on early childhood education policy and practice.
  - To promote **appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms** and to support educators in **counteracting current reforms** which undermine these appropriate practices.

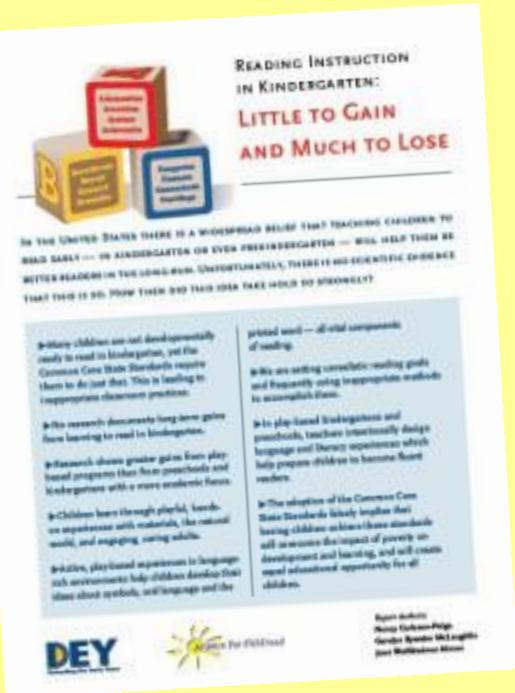


**Since 2012, DEY has been accomplishing these goals through:**

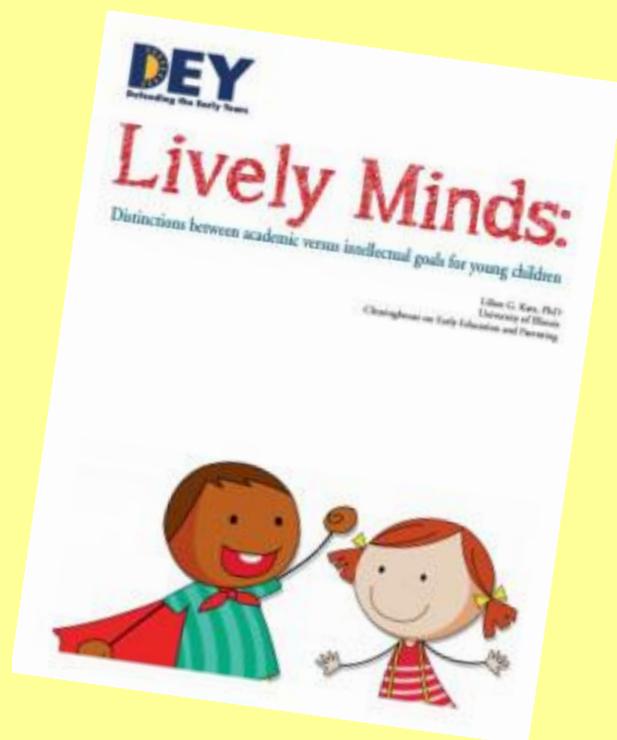
- 1. Publications**
- 2. Presentations**
- 3. Advocacy**
- 4. Online presence**
- 5. Collaboration**

# 1. Publications

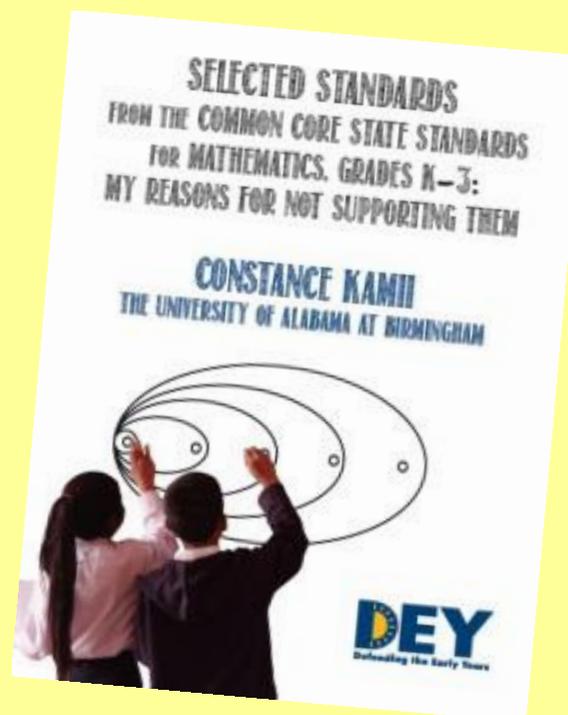
# Reports



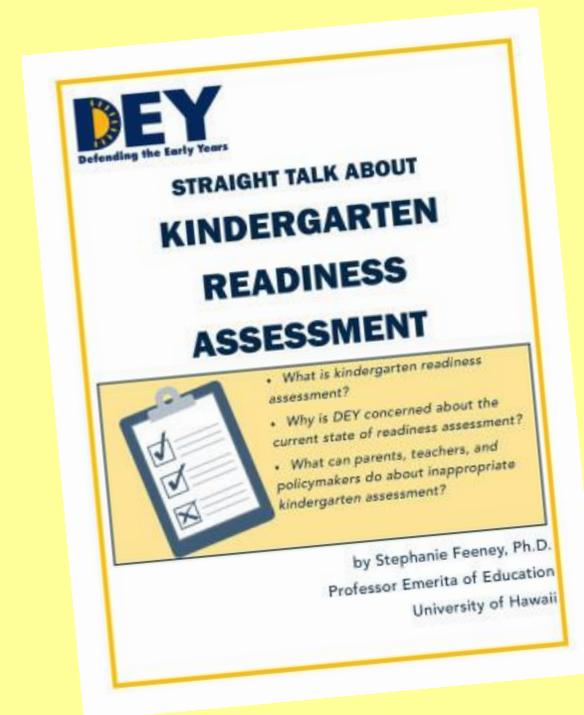
”Reading in Kindergarten: Little to Gain and Much to Lose”  
by Dr. Nancy Carlsson-Paige;  
Geraldyn Bywater  
McLaughlin,  
& Joan Almon (2015)



“Lively Minds: Distinctions between Academic and Intellectual Pursuits”  
by Dr. Lilian Katz  
(2015)

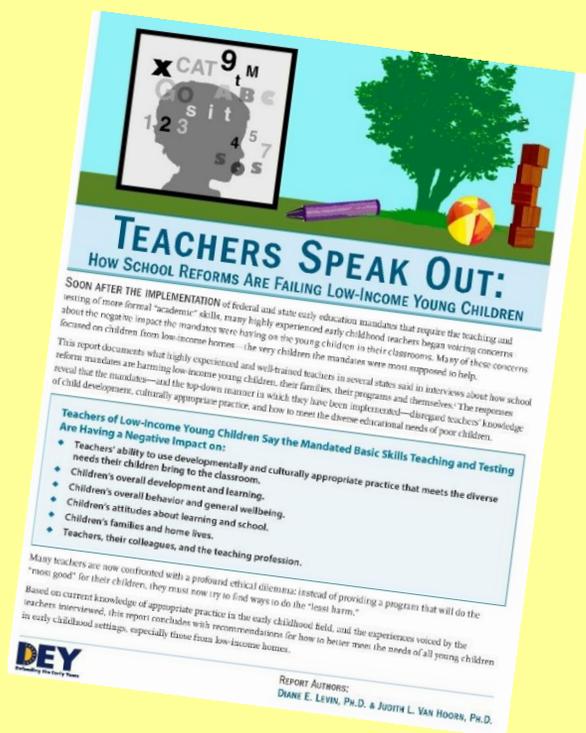


“Selected Standards from the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics Grades K-3: My Reasons for Not Supporting Them” by  
Dr. Constance Kamii  
(2015)

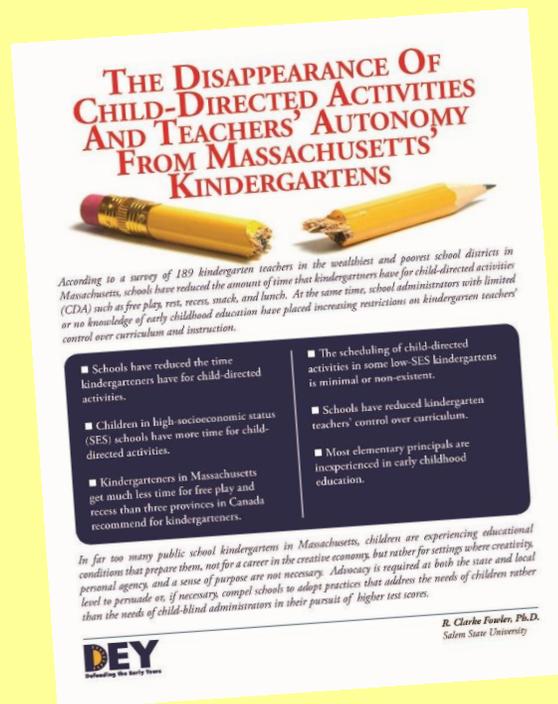


“Straight Talk about Kindergarten Readiness Assessment”  
by Dr. Stephanie Feeney (2016)

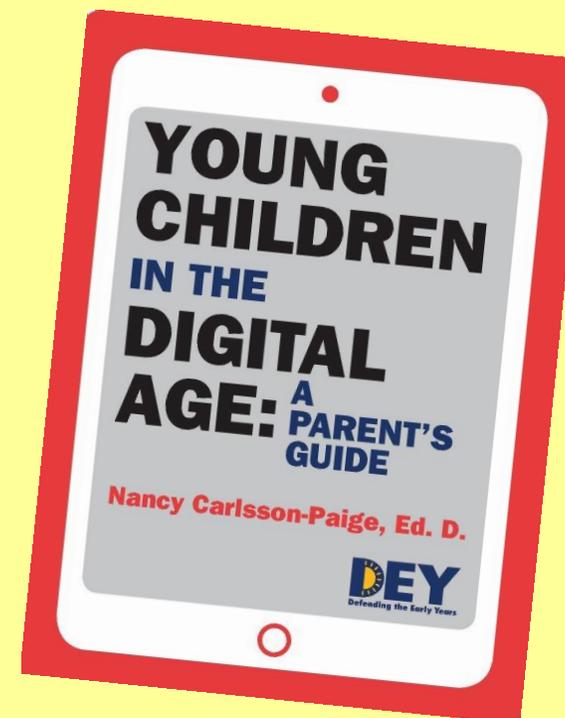
# Reports



“Teachers Speak Out” by Dr. Diane Levin and Dr. Judith Van Hoorn (2017)



“The Disappearance of Child-Directed Activities and Teachers’ Autonomy from Massachusetts’ Kindergartens” by Dr. R. Clarke Fowler (2018)



“Young Children in the Digital Age: A Guide for Parents” by Dr. Nancy Carlsson-Paige (2018)



# Position papers and statements

### SIX REASONS TO REJECT CCSS FOR GRADES K-3

**1. Many of the kindergarten - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade CCSS are developmentally inappropriate, and are not based on well-respected child development knowledge about how young children learn.**

The CCSS focus on reading and math skills that are not developmentally appropriate for young children. The CCSS focus on reading and math skills that are not developmentally appropriate for young children. The CCSS focus on reading and math skills that are not developmentally appropriate for young children.

**2. Many of the skills mandated by the CCSS erroneously assume that all children develop and learn skills at the same rate and in the same way.**

The CCSS assume that all children develop and learn skills at the same rate and in the same way. The CCSS assume that all children develop and learn skills at the same rate and in the same way.

**3. Young children learn best when their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical selves become highly engaged in the learning process.**

Young children learn best when their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical selves become highly engaged in the learning process. Young children learn best when their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical selves become highly engaged in the learning process.

**4. Assessments of young children should be observational in nature, ongoing, and connected to curriculum and teaching. They should take into account the broad-based nature of young children's learning, not isolated skills, and the natural developmental variation in all areas of young children's growth and development.**

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### SIX PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE POLICY

**1. Young children learn through active, direct experiences and play.**

Young children learn through active, direct experiences and play. Young children learn through active, direct experiences and play.

**2. Children learn skills and concepts at different times, rates, and paces.**

Children learn skills and concepts at different times, rates, and paces. Children learn skills and concepts at different times, rates, and paces.

**3. Early childhood educators do not participate in the development of the standards.**

Early childhood educators do not participate in the development of the standards. Early childhood educators do not participate in the development of the standards.

**4. There is a lack of research to support the current early childhood CCSS.**

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**5. The standards do not take into account how young children learn.**

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### WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW: SIX REASONS TO OPPOSE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR K-3 GRADES

**1) The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are developmentally inappropriate for young children.**

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are developmentally inappropriate for young children. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are developmentally inappropriate for young children.

**2) Much of the knowledge and concepts at different times, rates, and paces.**

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**3) Educaciones de primaria no participan en el desarrollo de los estándares.**

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**4) Existe una falta de evidencia investigativa que apoye la actual norma de CCSS en referencia a la enseñanza para niños en su infancia.**

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**5) Las normas no toman en cuenta cómo aprenden los niños jóvenes.**

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**6) La idea que CCSS será el canal de ingreso de talento en el desarrollo y aprendizaje de los niños es un mito.**

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### LO QUE TODO PADRE DEBE SABER: SEIS RAZONES PARA REUSAR LAS NORMAS ESTATALES "COMMON CORE" EN LOS GRADOS K-3

**1) Las Normas del Estado conocidas como "Common Core" (CCSS) son inapropiadas para los niños de K-3.**

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### STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

**The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for kindergarten are not grounded in research.**

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**Early childhood experts were not well represented in the writing of the standards.**

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**Childcare providers are required to address unattainable standards and construct developmentally inappropriate practices in early childhood classrooms.**

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### Defending the Early Years' Position Statement on "Baby PISA"

**In 2013, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development proposed an assessment of early learning outcomes called the International Early Learning and Child Well-Being Study.**

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**Ignoring early childhood educators, researchers and scholars in making early education policy is not new, but the scale of this latest effort in the Global Education Reform Movement for young children is a frightening development.**

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### DEY Position Statement on "Baby PISA"

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- “Six Reasons to Reject CCSS for Grades K-3” (2014)
- “Six Principles to Guide Policy” (2014)
- “What Parents Need to Know: Six Reasons to Oppose the Common Core State Standards for K-3rd Grade” (2014)
- Above article also published in Spanish, “Lo Que Todo Padre Debe Saber: Seis Razones Para Reusar Las Normas Estatales Common Core en los Grados K-3ro” (2015).
- “Straight Talk about the Common Core State Standards” (2016)
- Position Statement on “Baby PISA” (2018)
- Statement on Online Preschool (with Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood) (2018)
- Statement on Protecting Immigrant Children (2018)



# Fact Sheets

**DEY**  
Defending the Early Years  
www.deyproject.org

**FairTest**  
The National Center for Fair and Open Testing  
www.fairtest.org

## FACT SHEET ON TESTING AND YOUNG CHILDREN

In today's world, preschoolers, kindergartners, and children in the early elementary grades are required to take many tests throughout the school year. All this testing has had a negative impact on what and how children are taught, how they learn, and on their healthy development. Children should have rich learning experiences in the early school years that allow for active, play-based experiential learning. They need opportunities to make friends and develop social skills, to develop creativity, the capacity for problem solving, and a love for learning. The increase in the use of tests assessing young children's learning is through ongoing observations and individualized assessments by skilled teachers and assessors of children's work over time.

### WHY TESTING IS HARMFUL TO YOUNG CHILDREN

- Testing narrows the curriculum.
  - Age appropriate and meaningful learning experiences may be reduced or eliminated and replaced by teaching narrow skills in order to "teach to the test."
  - In teaching to the tests, many skills are taught in isolation and, therefore, have little or no meaning to children.
  - Testing takes valuable time away from activities that are appropriate for young children and how they learn, such as building with blocks and other materials, open-ended art projects, and make-believe, imaginative play.
- When teaching focuses on testing, it may ignore or downplay children's age and stage of development, their interests, and the needs of individual differences among children.
  - Play and activity-based learning with concrete materials have been disappearing from many early childhood classrooms, and—along with them—children's natural motivation and deep engagement in high quality learning.
- Testing can cause stress and anxiety and "undermine children's belief that school is a safe and nurturing place where they can engage in meaningful learning."
- Testing may convince children that they are inadequate or "dumb," especially when tested on materials that are developmentally inappropriate for their age and abilities.
- Today's tests are often conducted on computers. However, child development experts warn against young children spending significant time on computers.
  - Schools may be tempted to spend time training children how to use computer-based tests—taking precious time away from appropriate curriculum and directing resources toward hardware and software instead of hands-on learning materials.
  - Many tests use computer-based assessments, but there is a lack of research that computer-based testing is accurate when used with young children.<sup>1,2</sup>

### WHY TESTING IS NOT NEEDED

- Assessing young children is very different than assessing older children and adults.
  - Young children learn differently than older children and adults. They construct knowledge in experiential, interactive, concrete, and hands-on ways rather than through abstract reasoning and other than the traditional written kinds of assessment.
  - Tests given to children younger than eight often produce inaccurate or misleading results.<sup>3</sup>

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## HOJA INFORMATIVA SOBRE LOS EXAMENES Y LOS NIÑOS JÓVENES

En el mundo actual, los preescolares, los niños en kindergarten, y los niños en los primeros grados elementales están obligados tomar muchas pruebas a través del año escolar. Todas estas pruebas han tenido un impacto negativo en qué y cómo se enseñan a los niños, cómo aprenden y en su desarrollo saludable. Los niños deben tener experiencias ricas de aprendizaje en los primeros años escolares que permitan el aprendizaje activo y basado en el juego. Ellos necesitan oportunidades para hacer amigos y desarrollar habilidades sociales, la creatividad, la capacidad de resolver problemas, y el amor del aprendizaje. El aumento en el uso de pruebas con niños pequeños ha llevado a más instrucción basada en ejercicios de las habilidades específicas probadas. El método más confiable para evaluar el aprendizaje de los niños pequeños es a través de 1) observaciones en curso y evaluaciones individualizadas por maestros calificados y 2) evaluaciones del trabajo de los niños a través del tiempo.

### ¿POR QUÉ EL EXAMEN HACE DAÑO AL NIÑO JÓVENE?

- Las pruebas limitan el plan de estudios.
  - Las experiencias de aprendizaje apropiadas para la edad pueden ser reducidas o eliminadas y reemplazadas por la enseñanza de habilidades estrechas con el fin de "enseñar a la prueba."
  - En la enseñanza de las pruebas, muchas habilidades se enseñan de forma aislada y, por lo tanto, tienen poco o ningún significado para los niños.
  - Los exámenes llevan tiempo valioso aparte de las actividades que son apropiadas para los niños pequeños, como construir con bloques y otros materiales, proyectos de arte, y juegos imaginativos.
- Cuando la enseñanza se centra en las pruebas, puede ignorar o minimizar la edad y la etapa de desarrollo de los niños, sus intereses y las necesidades de las diferencias entre los niños.
  - El juego y el aprendizaje basado en la actividad con materiales concretos han sido desapareciendo de muchas aulas de la primera infancia y, junto con ellos, la motivación natural de los niños y el compromiso profundo con el aprendizaje de alta calidad.
- Las pruebas pueden causar estrés y ansiedad y "socavar la creencia de los niños de que la escuela es un lugar seguro y nutritivo donde pueden participar en un aprendizaje significativo."<sup>3</sup>
- Los exámenes pueden convencer a los niños de que son inadecuados o "estúpidos", especialmente cuando son probados en materiales que son inadecuados para su edad y habilidades.<sup>4</sup>
- A menudo las pruebas de hoy son dadas en computadoras. Sin embargo, los expertos en desarrollo infantil advierten que los niños pequeños no gasten mucho tiempo en computadoras.
  - Las escuelas pueden estar tentadas a dedicar tiempo a entrenar a los niños en el uso de pruebas basadas en computadoras, llevando un tiempo precioso aparte del currículo apropiado y dirigiendo los recursos hacia el hardware y el software en lugar de materiales prácticos de aprendizaje.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Muchas pruebas usan evaluaciones basadas en computadoras, pero no es cierto que las pruebas computarizadas sean exactas cuando se usan con niños pequeños.<sup>1,2</sup>

### POR QUÉ NO SE NECESITA LA PRUEBA

- La evaluación de los niños pequeños es muy diferente de la evaluación de niños mayores y adultos.
  - Los niños pequeños aprenden de manera diferente que los niños mayores y los adultos. "Construyen el conocimiento en formas experienciales, interactivas, concretas y prácticas, en lugar de hacerlo exclusivamente a través del razonamiento abstracto y las actividades de papel y lápiz." Por eso, debemos descubrir lo que los niños pequeños conocen de otras maneras aparte de las escritas.

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## FACT SHEET FOR FAMILIES ON TESTING AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Children in today's preschools, kindergartens, and early elementary grades must take many tests on rote skills and facts. This has led to more drill-based instruction of narrow skills. The emphasis on testing has had negative impact on children's healthy development and learning. Young children need rich learning experiences in the early school years that encourage active, play-based learning. They need to develop social skills, creativity, problem solving, and a love for learning. The most reliable ways to evaluate young children's learning are through ongoing observations by skilled teachers and assessments of children's work and play over time.

### WHY TESTING IS HARMFUL TO YOUNG CHILDREN

- Testing changes what and how children are taught.
  - Preparing for and taking tests means less time for valuable activities that young children need for learning, such as building with blocks and other materials, art projects, and imaginative play.
  - Deprived of these engaging activities, children may lose interest in school and learning.
- Testing can cause stress and make children feel that school is not a safe place.
  - Parents, teachers, and mental health professionals report many more symptoms of test stress among young children, including nausea, crying, panic attacks, tantrums, headaches, sleeplessness, depression, and refusal to go to school.
  - Test stress is especially harmful to more vulnerable children, such as those with special needs or children whose first language is not English.
- Testing may make children feel "dumb," especially when tested on materials that are developmentally inappropriate.
- Today's tests are often taken on computers, though child development experts warn against young children spending too much time on computers.
  - Schools may spend money on technology instead of hands-on learning materials.
  - Computer-based testing, when used with young children, may not be accurate.




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## HOJA INFORMATIVA PARA FAMILIAS SOBRE LAS PRUEBAS Y LOS NIÑOS PEQUEÑOS

Los niños en los preescolares de hoy en día, los jardines de infantes y los grados elementales tempranos necesitan tomar muchas pruebas de habilidades y hechos automáticas. Esto ha causado más instrucción basada en ejercicios de habilidades estrechas. El énfasis en las pruebas ha tenido un impacto negativo en el desarrollo y aprendizaje saludable de los niños. Los niños pequeños necesitan experiencias de aprendizaje activo y basado en el juego. Necesitan oportunidades para hacer amigos y desarrollar habilidades sociales, creatividad, resolución de problemas y un amor por el aprendizaje. Las maneras más confiables para evaluar el aprendizaje de los niños pequeños son a través de observaciones continuas por maestros calificados y evaluaciones del trabajo de los niños y el juego a través del tiempo.

### POR QUÉ LAS PRUEBAS SON PERJUDICIALES PARA LOS NIÑOS PEQUEÑOS

- La prueba cambia qué y cómo se enseñan a los niños.
  - Prepararse y tomar pruebas significa menos tiempo para las actividades que los niños pequeños necesitan para aprender—como construir con bloques y otros materiales, proyectos y arte, y juegos imaginativos.
  - Privados de estas actividades atractivas, los niños pueden perder el interés en la escuela y el aprendizaje.
- Las pruebas pueden causar estrés y hacer que los niños sientan que la escuela no es un lugar seguro.
  - Padres, maestros, y profesionales de la salud mental reportan muchos más síntomas de estrés de prueba entre los niños pequeños, incluso náuseas, llanto, ataques de pánico, berrinches, dolor de cabeza, insomnio, depresión y negatividad a ir a la escuela.
  - El estrés de las pruebas es especialmente perjudicial para los niños más vulnerables, como los que tienen necesidades especiales y los niños cuya idioma no es inglés.
- Las pruebas pueden hacer que los niños se sientan "tontos," especialmente cuando son probados con materiales que son inapropiados para su nivel del desarrollo.
- A menudo las pruebas de hoy se toman en las computadoras, aunque los expertos del desarrollo del niño advierten contra que los niños jóvenes pasen demasiado tiempo en las computadoras.
  - Las escuelas pueden gastar dinero en tecnología en lugar de materiales prácticos de aprendizaje.
  - Los resultados de las pruebas basadas en computadoras, cuando se usan con niños pequeños, pueden ser incorrectos.




“Fact Sheet on Testing and Young Children” and “Fact Sheet for Families on Testing and Young Children” as well as Spanish versions (2017)

# Impact of our publications

DEY's reports and position papers have been picked up by the national media and widely quoted in these and many others:



THE HUFFINGTON POST

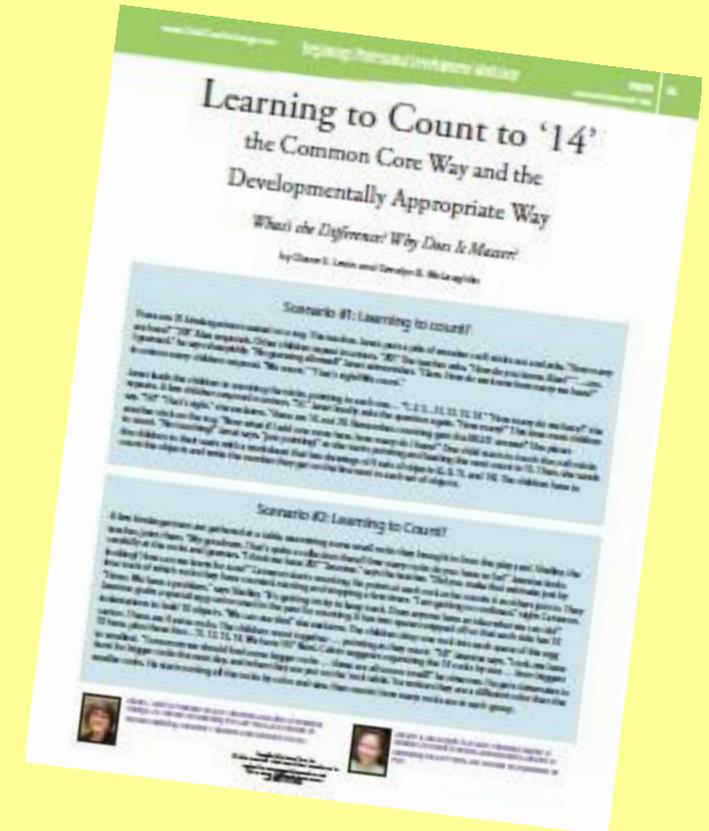
The Washington Post



# Articles



- **“Are The Common Core State Standards Failing Our Kids?”** by DEY Senior Advisor Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Director GERALYN Bywater McLaughlin which was the cover story in *Boston Parents Paper* (2014)
- **“Learning to Count to 14 the Common Core Way and the Developmentally Appropriate Way: What is the Difference and Does it Really Matter?”** by DEY Senior Advisor Diane Levin and Director GERALYN Bywater McLaughlin, published in *Child Care Information Exchange*. (2016)



# Articles and Op-Eds

- Senior Advisor Diane Levin and Denisha Jones, National Advisory board member: **“Preschool Suspensions: Young Children Who Are Being Left Behind”** *Huffington Post*. (2015)
- Senior Advisor Diane Levin and Denisha Jones, National Advisory Board member: **“Here’s Why Preschool Suspensions Are Harmful,”** *Education Week* (2016)
- **“What Educators Know About Teaching Young Children—But Policymakers Ignore”** by Nancy Carlsson-Paige, *The Washington Post*, (2017)
- Senior Advisor Nancy Carlsson-Paige: **“I Saw a Brilliant Way to Teach Kids. Unfortunately, It Wasn’t in the United States,”** *The Washington Post*, (2017)

The logo for Education Week, featuring the text "EDUCATION WEEK" in white, uppercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.

EDUCATION WEEK

The logo for The Washington Post, featuring the text "The Washington Post" in a black, serif font on a white rectangular background.

The  
Washington  
Post

The logo for The Huffington Post, featuring the text "THE HUFFINGTON POST" in a green, serif font on a white rectangular background.

THE HUFFINGTON POST

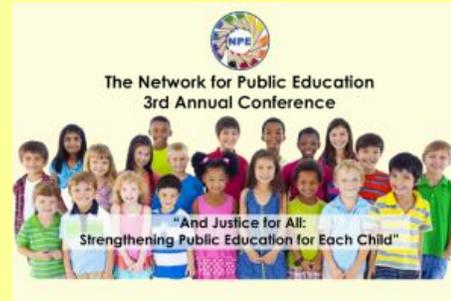
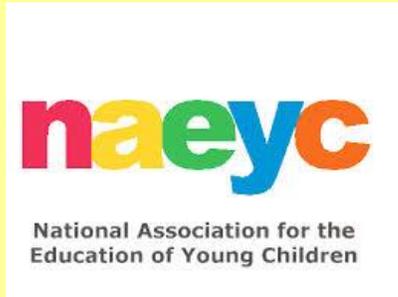
The logo for DEY, featuring the letters "DEY" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letter "D" is stylized with a yellow sunburst pattern. Below the letters is the tagline "Defending the Early Years" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

**DEY**  
Defending the Early Years

# 2. Presentations

# Conferences

DEY has participated in all **NAEYC Annual Conferences** since 2012, providing several workshops each year, and in all **Network for Public Education** conferences since its founding in 2014.



# Keynotes and Speeches

Members of our leadership team have given speeches and keynotes telling about the work of DEY to groups and organizations across the country and even around the world, including:

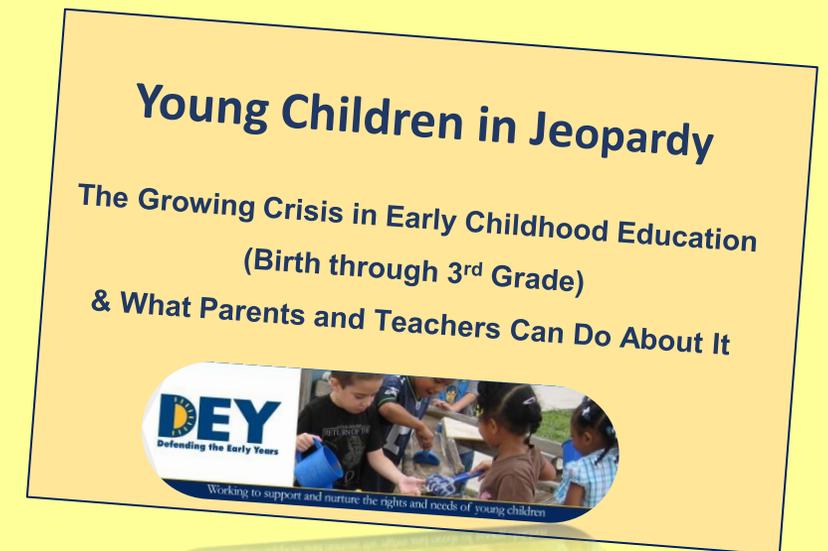
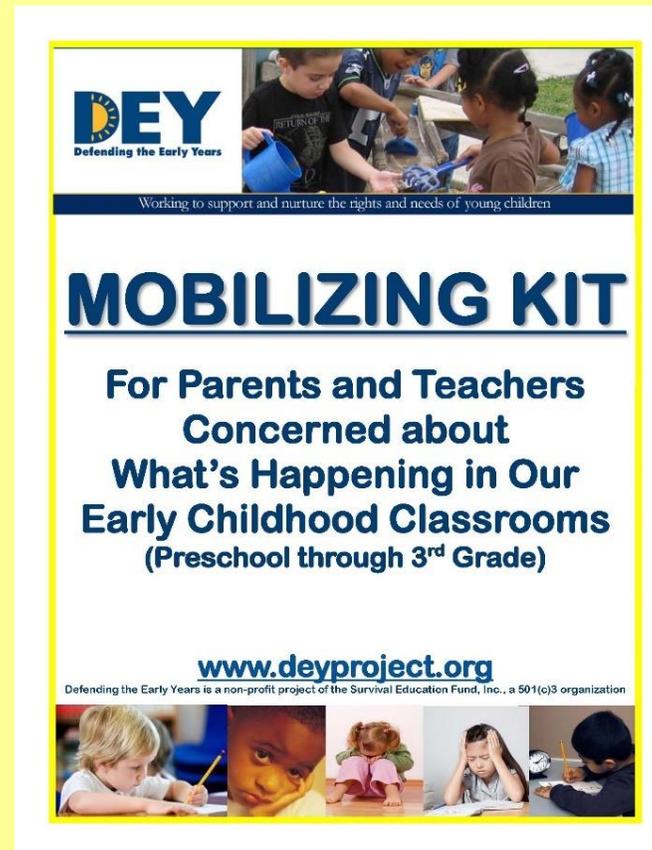
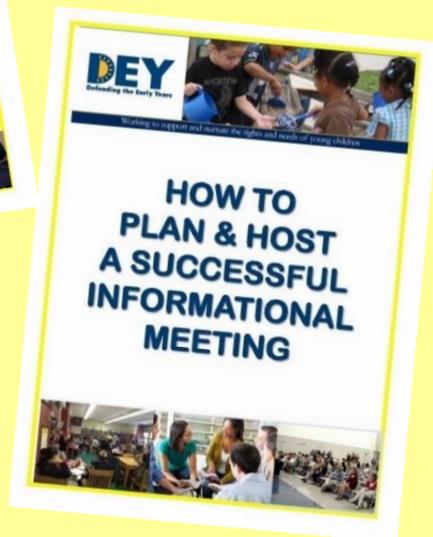
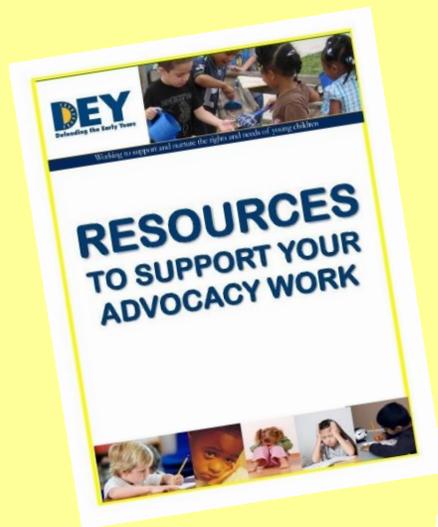
- American Scandinavian Dialogue, **NY**
- Boston-area Educators for Social Justice Conference, **MA**
- California Association for the Education of Young Children Conference, **CA**
- Childhood International Center for Early Learning and Development, **JORDAN**
- Children's Screen Time Action Network, **MA**
- City College of New York, **NY**
- Concordia University, **IL**
- County Donegal Annual Early Childhood Conference, **IRELAND**
- Education Writers Association, **LA**
- FairTest Annual Awards, **MA**
- First Focus Summit, Washington, **DC**
- German Society for Educational Research, **GERMANY**
- Global Family Village, **NEPAL**
- Lesley Innovation Series, **MA**
- Long Island Pre-K Initiative, **NY**
- Massachusetts Teachers Association, **MA**
- NAEYC Annual Conferences, **DC, TX, FL, CA & GA**
- Napflio University, **GREECE**
- Network for Public Education Conferences, **TX, IL, NC & IN**
- New England Child Life Association, **MA**
- New Hampshire Services Caring for Our Children Conference, **NH**
- Northern Ireland Early Years Organization, **NORTHERN IRELAND**
- Preschool-Kindergarten Summit, The Alliance for Early Childhood, **IL**
- Progressive Education Network Conference, **MA**
- Save Our Schools, Washington, **DC**
- Sligo Institute of Technology National Research Conference, **IRELAND**
- Sonoma State University, **CA**
- University of Delaware, **DE**
- University of Oklahoma, **OK**
- Wonderplay Conference, **NY**
- Yale University Child Study, **CT**



# 3. Advocacy

# Mobilizing Kit

DEY's "Mobilizing Kit" is available online. It includes both informational and action resources, as well as a Power Point presentation, entitled, "Young Children in Jeopardy."



# Mini-grants

DEY provides mini-grants of between \$200 and \$500 to help foster work in communities across the country.

**APPLICATION FOR DEY ACTION MINI-GRANT**

**DEY** Defending the Early Years

Welcome to the DEY Action Mini-Grant Initiative. We are excited to offer this mini-grant to help foster your good work in your community, as related to DEY's three goals. We are offering grants from \$200 to \$500. We accept and review applications on a rolling basis. Up to 20 awards per year will be granted (depending on grant size).

Application Date:

Individual/Group Applicant Name:

Address:

Phone Number(s):

Email:

Non-profit Fiscal Sponsor [Must be a 501(c)(3)]:

Fiscal Sponsor Contact Person [Must be included for tax purposes]:

Address of the Non-Profit Fiscal Sponsor:

Phone Number of the Non-Profit Fiscal Sponsor:

Tax Identification Number of the Fiscal Sponsor:

Please describe in detail how you would use a DEY Action Mini-Grant. How does it relate to DEY's three principle goals, as listed below? Include your proposed budget. What outcomes do you hope to achieve?

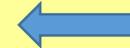
Email your completed application to: Gerilyn Bywater McLaughlin & Blakely Bundy, Co-Directors of DEY, at [deydirector@gmail.com](mailto:deydirector@gmail.com). Please use the subject line "Mini-Grant Application."

**DEY's Three Principle Goals:**

- To mobilize the early childhood community to speak out with well-reasoned arguments against inappropriate standards, assessments, and classroom practices.
- To track the effects of new standards, especially those linked to the Common Core State Standards, on early childhood education policy and practice.
- To promote appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms and support educators in counteracting current reforms which undermine these appropriate practices.



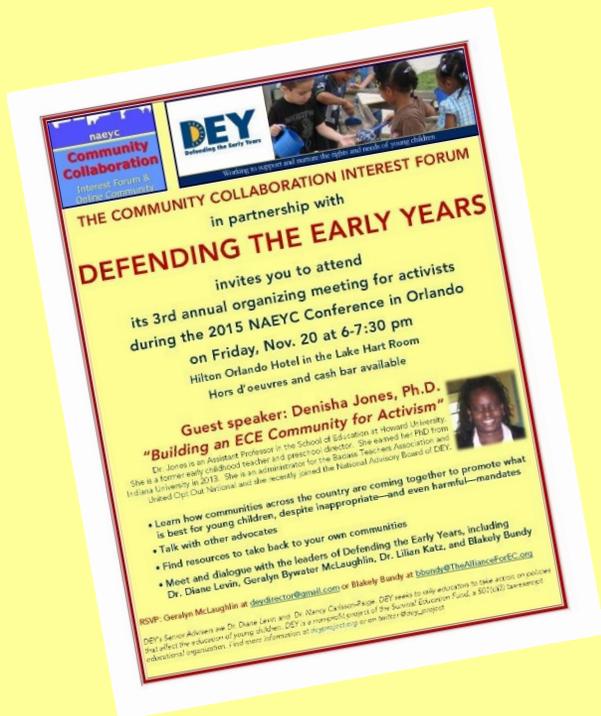
DEY's first mini-grant, awarded in 2014, resulted in a rally for play that took place in Minneapolis.



Other grants have been given to individuals and organizations located in: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, and New York.

# Organizing meetings during the NAEYC conference

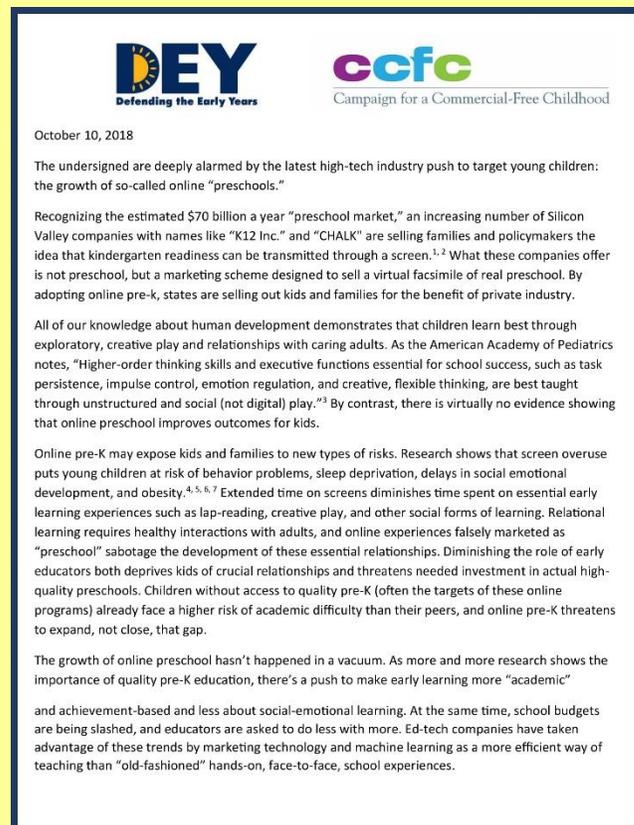
Each year, DEY holds its Annual Organizing Meeting during the NAEYC Annual Conference. Participants have an opportunity to talk about the challenges they are facing in their local communities, to hear about what DEY is doing to address these challenges, and to suggest additional resources that DEY could provide for activists.



# DEY Takes Action

DEY responds to issues related to early childhood as they arise, on topics including “Baby Pisa,” protecting immigrant families, and sending an open letter to Senator Warren about her proposal for universal child care.

Below is a letter co-sponsored with Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood about online preschools. Released on October 10, 2018, it was signed by over 120 early childhood experts and professional organizations.



**DEY**  
Defending the Early Years

**ccfc**  
Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

October 10, 2018

The undersigned are deeply alarmed by the latest high-tech industry push to target young children: the growth of so-called online “preschools.”

Recognizing the estimated \$70 billion a year “preschool market,” an increasing number of Silicon Valley companies with names like “K12 Inc.” and “CHALK” are selling families and policymakers the idea that kindergarten readiness can be transmitted through a screen.<sup>1,2</sup> What these companies offer is not preschool, but a marketing scheme designed to sell a virtual facsimile of real preschool. By adopting online pre-k, states are selling out kids and families for the benefit of private industry.

All of our knowledge about human development demonstrates that children learn best through exploratory, creative play and relationships with caring adults. As the American Academy of Pediatrics notes, “Higher-order thinking skills and executive functions essential for school success, such as task persistence, impulse control, emotion regulation, and creative, flexible thinking, are best taught through unstructured and social (not digital) play.”<sup>3</sup> By contrast, there is virtually no evidence showing that online preschool improves outcomes for kids.

Online pre-K may expose kids and families to new types of risks. Research shows that screen overuse puts young children at risk of behavior problems, sleep deprivation, delays in social emotional development, and obesity.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup> Extended time on screens diminishes time spent on essential early learning experiences such as lap-reading, creative play, and other social forms of learning. Relational learning requires healthy interactions with adults, and online experiences falsely marketed as “preschool” sabotage the development of these essential relationships. Diminishing the role of early educators both deprives kids of crucial relationships and threatens needed investment in actual high-quality preschools. Children without access to quality pre-K (often the targets of these online programs) already face a higher risk of academic difficulty than their peers, and online pre-K threatens to expand, not close, that gap.

The growth of online preschool hasn’t happened in a vacuum. As more and more research shows the importance of quality pre-K education, there’s a push to make early learning more “academic” and achievement-based and less about social-emotional learning. At the same time, school budgets are being slashed, and educators are asked to do less with more. Ed-tech companies have taken advantage of these trends by marketing technology and machine learning as a more efficient way of teaching than “old-fashioned” hands-on, face-to-face, school experiences.



# 4. Online presence

# Website



Our website, [www.deyproject.org](http://www.deyproject.org), has been live since January, 2012. It was redesigned in 2016.



# Website

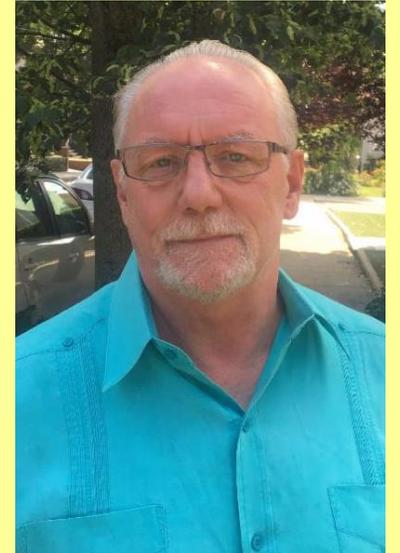


Our **Teacher Talks** blogger:

**Denisha Jones**, Ph.D., J.D., Director of Teacher Education and Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Trinity Washington University, Washington, DC

We also encourages **guest bloggers** to write for the DEY website, as a place where teachers, parents, and others can tell about their direct experiences with education “reforms” and other aspect of early childhood education.

A recent guest blogger was former kindergarten teacher **Jim St. Clair**’s blogs entitled “Kindergarten Isn’t What It Was!” and “The Lesson of Kindergarten.”



# Facebook & Twitter



DEY has an active presence on Facebook, with over 6,000 followers, and on Twitter, with over 1,000 followers, managed by our PR Coordinator Gina Contursi.

# Video



Nancy Carlsson-Paige's Tedx Talk. Her topic:  
**"When Education Goes Wrong: Taking the  
Creativity and Play Out of Learning."** (2013)

# Video



**Reading Instruction in Kindergarten:  
Little to Gain, Much to Lose” (2015)**  
(Over 67,000 views)

After two of its reports were released, DEY created five-minute videos summarizing the findings of each report. Those videos and others are available on **DEY’s YouTube Channel**.



**“Lively Minds: Distinctions between Academic  
and Intellectual Goals for Young Children” (2015)**  
(Over 8,000 views)



# Video: 2-Minute Documentary Series



**Teachers Speak Out: Bianca Tanis**



**Teachers Speak Out: Roberta Udoh**



**Teachers Speak Out: James St. Clair**

**Teachers Speak Out: Kisha Reid**

**Coming soon!**

# 5. Collaboration

# Collaborations

DEY has collaborated with other organizations, including:

- Alliance for Childhood
- Bad-Ass Teachers
- Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood
- FairTest
- NAEYC
- Network for Public Education
- Progressive Education Network
- Save Our Schools
- TRUCE
- United Opt-Out



# DEY's Leadership Team



**Senior Advisors:**  
Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Ed.D.  
and Diane Levin, Ph.D.



**Co-Directors:**  
Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin, M.Ed.  
and Blakely Bundy, M.Ed.



**Director of Early  
Childhood Organizing:**  
Denisha Jones, Ph.D., JD

**Director of Communications  
and Social Media:**  
Gina Contursi



# DEY's National Advisory Board

## **Sherry Cleary**

Executive Director,  
New York City Early Childhood  
Professional Development Institute,  
City University of New York  
New York, NY

## **Bill Crain**

Professor of Psychology,  
City College of New York  
New York, NY

## **Stephanie Feeney**

Professor Emerita,  
University of Hawaii at Manoa,  
Portland, OR

## **Doris Pronin Fromberg,**

Professor of Education,  
Hofstra University  
Hemstead, NY

## **Ayla Gavins**

Principal, Mission Hill School  
Boston, MA

## **Marcy Guddemi**

National Consultant  
Daytona Beach, FL

## **Denisha Jones**

Director of Teacher Education and  
Assistant Professor in the School of  
Education at Trinity Washington  
University, Washington, DC

## **Edgar Klugman**

Professor Emeritus Wheelock College &  
Co-Founder, Playing for Keeps  
Boston, MA

## **Deborah Meier**

Author and Activist  
Hillsdale, NY

## **Ruth Rodriguez-Fay**

Save Our Schools and United Opt-Out  
Boston, MA

## **James St. Clair**

Retired Kindergarten Teacher  
Boston, MA

## **Judith Van Hoorn**

Professor Emerita,  
University of the Pacific  
El Cerrito, CA



# DEY's Updated Mission Statement

**Defending the Early Years (DEY) is a non-profit organization working for a just, equitable, and quality early childhood education for every young child. DEY publishes reports, makes mini-documentaries, issues position statements, advocates on policy, and has an active website full of resources, blogs, and activist steps for early childhood educators.**



**Since its founding in 2012, Defending the Early Years has accomplished a great deal, despite a very limited budget.**

**But there is much more to do to ensure that young children have good childhoods and developmentally appropriate early childhood education.**

**ONWARD!**

