



Program Spotlight: Growing and Learning Together Through Play CUCE-NYC

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The 2Gen Initiative Program Spotlight Series is intended to feature parent education programs across the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) system that incorporate a two-generational (2Gen) or whole-family approach to parent education. This Program Spotlight focuses on **Growing and Learning Together through Play** (GLTTP) in CUCE-NYC and highlights impressions from CCE parent educators who have implemented the program. The primary goals of the GLTTP program are to 1) promote quality adult-child intersections that support early learning at home, and 2) mitigate the achievement gap and early learning disparities experienced by children in marginalized communities. These goals encourage bringing together families and nurturing children's growth and learning through a 2Gen approach, and foster inclusivity and equity in parenting education.

Program Background & History

GLTTP is a newly developed 8-week workshop series intended for parents and primary caregivers whose children are between the ages of 2 and 5 years. The research-based curriculum offers parenting education workshops aimed at improving early childhood language acquisition and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related skills.

Between the first and seventh workshop, parents and primary caregivers learn, reflect, and engage in activities and conversations on the role of play in early learning and ways to support the development of STEM-related skills in young children at home. During the eighth and final workshop, participants bring their children to the workshop for a parent-child play session with fun activities that incorporate content and reflections from the series. The workshops emphasize cohesion across modules, building on previous knowledge and helping participants form connections as they navigate more complex ideas throughout the series.

In the last three years, CUCE-NYC has offered and implemented the GLTTP program in collaboration with Head Start and Early Childhood Centers in New York City. The Program was formally implemented in 2017-18 as part of a community-based collaboration with Audrey Johnson Learning Center in Brooklyn, where four workshops were pilot-tested. In 2019-2020, CUCE-NYC educators collaborated with East Harlem Bilingual Head Start and worked with families to incorporate previous feedback and implement the full 8-week

workshop series. Typically, educators work in partnership with Head Start and Early Childhood Centers, but as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the curriculum has been adapted for virtual accessibility.

Conclusion

To date, 48 families across New York City have participated in the GLTTP program. Program staff have also recently partnered with the New York City Department for the Aging “Foster Grandparent Program” to provide online training to foster grandparents working with young children in early childhood centers, and have begun implementing the GLTTP workshops with a group of foster grandparents. The goal is to continue to grow and build new partnerships to meet the needs of other groups interested in supporting families and caregivers through this promising program.