



The CAYL Institute  
P.O. Box 391378  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
[info@cayl.org](mailto:info@cayl.org)  
<http://www.cayl.org>

## OVERVIEW OF THE CAYL INSTITUTE

**Vision:** The vision of *Community Advocates for Young Learners*, or CAYL, Institute is a nation the right to high quality early education and care is embedded in public policy and professional practice.

**Mission:** Our mission is to organize, equip and empower people to create change on behalf of children.

**Core Principles:** We are guided and informed by our Core Principles:

- 1) *Representative Leadership*: Involving people in decisions that affect them.
- 2) *Commitment to Diversity*: Ensuring all voices are heard and bridging multiple perspectives.
- 3) *Solutions*: Embracing responsibility to create sustainable change.
- 4) *Impact and Innovation*: Taking action that is timely, relevant and immediately actionable.

The long term goal of the CAYL Institute is *to create positive change for all children in the Commonwealth* through our Fellowships through policy change and leadership development.

### **History & Background**

- **2003:** In 2003, in order to gather information about strategic opportunities to build public will for children, the Schott Foundation convened four conversations with community and organizational leaders who have deep roots in Massachusetts, consistently support children's programming and are committed to work with communities of color. The 39 leaders who participated in the series of four "diversity dialogues" included a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We realized five significant lessons from these dialogues:
  1. That diversity does indeed matter in the Commonwealth;
  2. That change strategies must invest in people and information;
  3. That effective strategies must include their communities as architects of change;
  4. That "leading together" is of great value;
  5. And that authentic leadership must remain closely connected to the families and communities served.

The full report, "**Leading Together: Communities of Color as Architects of Justice for All Children in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts**" can be found at <http://cayl.org/files/DeborahFile.pdf>

- **2004:** Based on the feedback from the "diversity dialogues" we asked ourselves, *what if*:
  - We created a community among those from divergent (and often competing) strands of the early education community?
  - We focused explicitly on learning and practicing the tools of public policy to identify and develop solutions to policy issues *in our own local communities*?
  - We built in diversity as a means of demonstrating and promoting the democratic principles which must be the foundation of change?

From these ideas, in 2004, the **Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education** was piloted. The Schott Fellowship uniquely builds concentrations of committed professionals acting *locally* who are strategically positioned to influence and support change on behalf of children.

- **2006: The CAYL Principals Fellowship in Early Care and Education** is launched as a result of Schott Fellows public policy work. Since then we have worked with a total of 29 elementary school principals in Massachusetts with pre-kindergarten programs in an effort to align standards,

curriculum, instruction, expectations and assessment. Our work has also reached principals nationwide through collaboration with the National Association for Elementary School Principals.

- **2008-Present:** CAYL Fellowships have rapidly and effectively become a dynamic and important part of the Massachusetts advocacy landscape. By building, equipping and promoting strong learning networks, Fellows have become visible in significant positions of public service. Given the rising demand for our programs we undertook a reorganization and rebranding process that led to the creation of our umbrella organization, the ***Community Advocates for Young Learners***, or CAYL, Institute.

### **Programs and Services:**

Chief among the CAYL Institute's accomplishments is the high regard and respect with which our programs are viewed across Massachusetts. We operate five major programs and services:

- 1) **The CAYL Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education:** Since 2004, there have been 65 CAYL Schott Fellows, 62% of whom have been people of color. The focal activities of the CAYL Schott Fellowship include:
  - a) **CAYL Policy Forums** – Since 2004 we have reached over 900 people through our statewide Policy Forums, convening national and regional leaders on topics that are *timely, relevant, and immediately actionable* in the Massachusetts early care and education field.
  - b) **Policy Projects** – CAYL Schott Fellows publish Policy Briefs on key matters related to early care and education in Massachusetts. Copies of each CAYL Schott Fellows Policy Briefs are available on our web site: <http://cayl.org/?q=policyprojects>
- 2) **The CAYL Principals Fellowship:** Since 2006, there have been 29 CAYL Principal Fellows. Fellows become skilled in promoting educational excellence and providing the foundations of educational attainment for young children from age three through third grade. Fellows:
  - Improve knowledge and skills about early childhood education;
  - Acquire knowledge about early learning standards, appropriate expectations, appropriate inputs and outcomes from early childhood programs;
  - Build cultural and linguistic diversity sensitivity;
  - Strengthen school, family and community partnerships;
  - Access intensive on-site coaching;
  - Develop relationships with other elementary and early education Principals who serve children under five years old;
  - Learn from and are mentored by outstanding national speakers and leaders in the field.
- 3) **International Study Tours:** Our International Study Tours focus attention on global issues in the field of early care and education, provide hands-on experience with the issue, develop and promote policy recommendations, and communication strategies to share and extend the learning both before and after the Study Tour occurs.
- 4) **Knowledge Creation and Dissemination:** In addition to the CAYL Schott Fellowship Policy Projects, there are many examples of original research produced by the CAYL Institute, which can be found at <http://www.cayl.org>
- 5) **Providing Leadership in Massachusetts by Participating in National and Statewide Early Care and Education Efforts,** including the statewide Massachusetts Early Education and Care and Out-of-School-Time Workforce Development Task Force, Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Boston Birth to Five School Readiness Initiative, the Western Massachusetts Leadership in Action (WMLA) Network, and Governor Deval Patrick's School Readiness Commission.

**For more information on the CAYL Institute, please visit <http://www.cayl.org> or contact [info@cayl.org](mailto:info@cayl.org)**