This City College all-day Conference was held on March 10 and opened in Shepard’s Great Hall. The conference was premised on the belief that optimal learning results when the whole child is supported in his or her cultural context; when teaching fosters active engagement, is responsive to diverse cultures and languages, supports family involvement in learning, and develops not only cognitive skills but other human attributes such as curiosity, perseverance, empathy, flexibility, resilience, and social awareness.

It is in the context of these issues that this conference addressed how educators and schools can nurture children in accordance with their developmental needs and teach them in the ways that they learn. Presenters shared effective practices and made recommendations for how school and societal challenges can be negotiated to create more effective and more equitable learning environments to enhance the life chances of our youngest citizens.

What a great day! We had over 700 registrants (and we think over 600 actually came!), an inspiring keynote, forty interesting and informative break-out sessions, a cultural arts fair that provided information about the work of 38 NYC cultural arts organizations, a smashing performance by the 4th grade African drummers from the Bronx Community Charter School, and a brilliant closing panel. We think the conference accomplished our goal of raising issues critical to the well-being of children, featuring practices that are supportive of children and families, and inspiring and renewing commitment to advocate for a healthy and equitable childhood for all.

We believe that City College is the absolutely most appropriate place in New York City to have held a conference with a message of ensuring
that all children are provided with the education they deserve. We hope to keep the energy going by staying connected in the future through the conference website and also through a facebook page that was created the other day: https://www.facebook.com/ and find InDefenseOfChildhood.