



## **ABC - The Graham School**

(please see website for overarching vision and mission of ABC) [Early Childhood — Association to Benefit Children](#)

The Graham school at Echo Park, located at 126 th street and Park Ave, is an Early childhood center providing services to the most vulnerable families of East Harlem. Families that enroll in our center are families who, daily, combat the deleterious effects of poverty. We prioritize families who are homeless or precariously housed, families who have experienced trauma, have been victimized, marginalized, or have child welfare involvement. Children who are in foster care or those with special needs are also prioritized.

Food security is a concern for many of our families and often, the only meals received are those provided by the school. The Graham school currently provides services for 225 families. There are 12 classrooms providing on site early education for children from 6 weeks old to 5 years of age. We take a play-based approach to learning as we know play is a child's work.

Our classrooms are culturally, linguistically, and emotionally responsive. We are child centered and family focused. Every member of the child's family; however that family would like to define themselves, is provided services. We celebrate and acknowledge the parent as the child's first educator and partner with the family address key long term and short term objectives. Whether this be continuing a parent's education, finding employment, or moving out of a shelter, a family worker works closely with the family.

Due to the vicious cycle of poverty and the often intergenerational cycle of abuse, we are trained in research based practices that support an emotional approach to the learning environment. We have parent-infant psychotherapists within the classroom environments supporting the hellos and goodbyes and highlighting touch point moments between caregiver and child.

In addition to the center based program we have provided in-home service to 85 families with children from birth to 3 years olds as well as moms who are pregnant. Whether home based or center based; families are listened to and are met where they are ready to be met. When a need arises, we also have the capability of referring to other ABC programs that support the emotional wellness of family members.

We have given out close to half a million meals to children and families, many of which were delivered to the family's door. Our doors have remained open; however we are providing both on site and remote learning options for all our families. Our donation corner also supports families by providing new or gently worn clothing, shoes, toys, household items to families in need.

Familial stress is real and the lift is often heavy. We are here to realize stressors in compassionate ways that support long term outcomes for families.