

How Children's Aid Streamlined Onboarding with Change Up Learning



Why Children's Aid Needed to Rethink Onboarding

Children's Aid is a 100+ year-old nonprofit that provides comprehensive support to children, youth, and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods. As the Youth Division navigated rolling hiring cycles, leaders identified a growing need for greater clarity, consistency, and visibility in the onboarding process.

The division also wanted to ensure staff were engaging meaningfully with the Employee Handbook. To address this, they asked us to transform key elements into an interactive course — complete with custom videos, knowledge checks, and opportunities to highlight critical content.

The pilot was designed to achieve **four goals**:

- 1 Create a custom course describing the "Children's Aid way."
- 2 Develop a consistent, repeatable onboarding process.
- 3 Centralize tracking of professional development tasks.
- 4 Ensure staff were prepared for their roles in a timely manner.

At a Glance

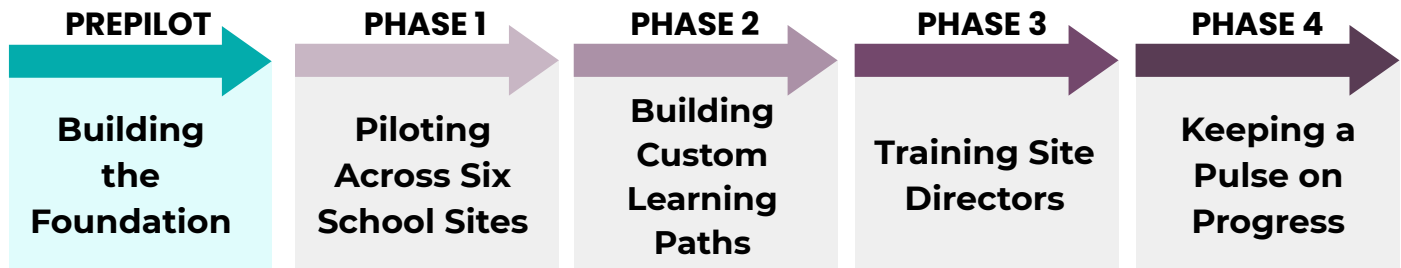


Challenge: Year-round hiring across school-based sites meant perpetual onboarding cycles, which were time-consuming and led to uneven staff preparedness.

Solution: A division-wide onboarding approach supported through Change Up Learning's Assignment feature, Custom Courses, and Custom Learning Paths.

Results: A centralized system for assigning onboarding tasks and tracking progress across staff, leading to more consistent preparedness among all new staff.

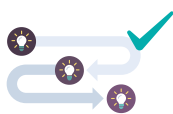
How the Onboarding Experience Was Rebuilt



Pre-Pilot - Building the Foundation: Children's Aid shared their values, org charts, and employee handbook. Change Up Learning turned that content into something staff actually wanted to engage with: a fully customized course featuring videos, interactives, and knowledge checks.



Phase 1 - Piloting Across Six School Sites: The Youth Division launched a pilot program using the Change Up Learning platform across six sites. Participating sites committed to following all defined hiring and onboarding steps and gathered regularly to reflect on progress, troubleshoot challenges, and spot emerging trends.



Phase 2 - Building Custom Learning Paths: Pilot insights drove action. Two custom learning paths were developed, each combining self-paced courses, custom content, supervisor coaching sessions, and a new-hire feedback survey into a seamless experience.



Phase 3 - Training Site Directors: With the learning paths in place, site directors needed the tools and confidence to lead. A dedicated training session clarified ownership of the onboarding process and built skills in assigning learning paths and using reports to track progress.



Phase 4 - Keeping a Pulse on Progress: Onboarding does not stop at day one. Monthly internal meetings give Children's Aid leaders a regular opportunity to review progress data and new hire feedback, keeping the process sharp and responsive.

What Made the Change Work

- ✓ **Division-wide commitment** – Leaders and team members at every level committed to a shared, defined roadmap built for repeatable success.
- ✓ **Clear communication of expectations** – Site directors actively communicate the why and when of professional development and other onboarding tasks, reducing confusion.
- ✓ **A platform built for how they actually hire** – Since Children's Aid does not hire in one wave, the self-paced, on-demand experience meant onboarding could meet new staff wherever they were in the hiring cycle, all year long.
- ✓ **Defined, scalable onboarding** – Creating a self-paced experience that can be accessed on demand, year-round, to support Children's Aid's hiring trends.

“Using Change Up Learning to train and track our learning and development needs has been a game-changer and truly transformational for our staff. Customizing our own courses has allowed us to strengthen our current onboarding practices to ensure staff feel supported from the moment they begin their jobs.”

–Yalenis Cruz, Senior Deputy Director of Learning & Development

What Other Organizations Can Learn

Make it yours. Generic onboarding gets generic results. Building a course that reflects your organization's voice, values, and culture sets the tone from day one.

Design for how you actually hire. If hiring is rolling and year-round, onboarding should be too. A self-paced, on-demand experience ensures no new hire falls through the cracks, regardless of when they start. Develop custom onboarding courses that reflect the unique voice of your organization.

Know who owns what. Onboarding breaks down when responsibilities are unclear. Defining roles and expectations across every level of the process keeps things moving and accountable.

Track progress without losing the personal touch. Centralized data gives leaders visibility. But the goal is not just completion rates. Use what you learn to coach, support, and connect with new staff in meaningful ways.



Ready to Get Started?

Learn how [Change Up Learning](https://www.changeuplearning.com) can help you create scalable, trackable onboarding and professional development experiences.

