

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES  
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CITY NETWORK  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

It's that time of year at IYEF, when we reflect on the past but also look toward the future. We will remember 2005 for many things. For many Americans, most notable was the shared experience of witnessing the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In addition, Congress adjourned for the year and members cut funding for critical supports for families in the appropriations bills, and considered budget reconciliation proposals that would eliminate additional services for millions of women and children. Now more than ever, we need to pull together and work toward improving the quality of life for families. IYEF staff wants to thank all of the members of the Early Care and Education City Network for working so diligently on behalf of young children. Your dedication and commitment to strengthen early care and education provides numerous families with resources that improve their quality of life. We look forward to working with you and continuing to build upon the successes of initiatives launched in 2005.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in strengthening early care and education. If you have any questions about the network or this Update, contact Tonja Rucker, Senior Program Associate, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities at: rucker@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3004, or fax – 202/626-3043.

**NLC NETWORK NEWS**

- **2006 Annual Congressional City Conference.** The 2006 National League of Cities Congressional City Conference will take place on March 11-15, 2006, in Washington, D.C. The 109th Congress and the President will focus on range of issues that matter to America's cities, villages, and towns. Participation in this conference offers the best opportunity to learn about the issues, present a strong and unified municipal voice in Congress, develop and strengthen relationships with members of Congress, and to advocate local positions on key priorities. The National League of Cities provides the resources, the connections, and the collective power to help city leaders have an impact on Capitol Hill. Attending this conference will help you to educate and advocate on behalf of the people you collectively represent. For detailed information and online registration, please visit: <http://www.nlc.org/Conferences%5F%5F%5FEvents/Congressional%5FCity%5FConference>
- **Free Audioconference: “Strategies That Work for Our Disconnected Youth.”** Cities have a vested interest in helping disconnected youth to access positive opportunities and support to get their lives onto a positive path, including education and employment services. However, cities cannot make progress in this area without strong cross-system relationships with school districts, non-profit organizations, and state and county agencies that interact with these youth on a daily basis. An audioconference addressing this issue will take place on February 23 at 2:30pm. It will highlight successful strategies that engage disconnected youth, ages 16-24, who are unemployed, high school dropouts, transitioning from foster care, involved in the justice system, or otherwise disconnected. These individuals pose both a

significant challenge and a great asset to cities and towns across the country. The strategies shared during this call will energize and invigorate your youth development program. Please join us and for more detailed information and registration, please visit:

<http://www.nlc.org/IYEF/events%5F%5F%5Faudioconferences/>.

- **Adopt the City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth.** Join hundreds of cities and towns across the country in adopting a Platform developed by NLC's Council on Youth, Education, and Families that identifies the essential tasks that strengthen families, improve outcomes for children and youth, and sustain the community's efforts over time. The Platform also lays out a series of concrete action steps that every community can take in early childhood development, youth development, education and afterschool, health and safety, helping youth in transition, family economic success, and improving neighborhoods and community. If you have questions contact Michael Karpman at [karpman@nlc.org](mailto:karpman@nlc.org) or 202-626-3072. Click on the following link to view and adopt the platform: <http://www.nlc.org/iyef/7915.cfm>.
- **NLC Seeks Examples of City Initiatives to Keep Children and Youth Safe.** The National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education and Families (IYEF) has launched a nationwide search for exemplary partnership programs in which mayors and law enforcement officials are working together for the safety of children and youth. The project seeks to identify and highlight active programs which include, but are not limited to areas such as youth violence prevention/reduction, juvenile re-entry, mentoring, or bullying. Program profiles will detail mayors and police chiefs' motivations and methods for collaboration, in addition to signs of success and evidence of impact. Profiles of selected programs will be published in the U.S. Department of Justice-COPS Office Innovations series, in the League's Nation's Cities Weekly newspaper, and will also be featured at conferences such as those of the League and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Please feel free to submit a nomination or forward this message to a more appropriate person in your city that you believe may be interested in highlighting your city's efforts to keep children and youth safe. To nominate a program use link <http://report1.nlc.org:8000/surveyor/index.php?sid=44> to fill out a brief questionnaire about the program you are nominating, or for more information, or contact Melissa Rogers at (202) 626-3006 or [rogers@nlc.org](mailto:rogers@nlc.org).
- **Spotlight Your City and Share Emerging Issues in 2006.** In the New Year, consider having your city or town spotlighted in a Network Update. We are always looking to highlight examples of local government innovation around early childhood. Please contact us if you would like to share your city or town's work to promote early childhood success.

It is also important that we hear from you about new or emerging issues that impact your efforts to promote early childhood success. We are particularly interested in learning more about city strategies to support immigrant families with young children and support children impacted by parental drug abuse. Please contact Tonja Rucker at (202) 626-3004 or [rucker@nlc.org](mailto:rucker@nlc.org) to share the challenges you have faced or successful strategies you have employed to address such issues.

## **CITY SPOTLIGHT:**

## **CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS (Pop: 101,355)**

**NOTE:** This spotlight provides an opportunity to gather ideas from other network members. You are encouraged to share information about your local efforts, so that we can spotlight your activities and best practices in a future update.

The City of Cambridge, Massachusetts has a long history of providing quality services and programs for young children and their families. These programs promote successful social, physical, and cognitive development for children birth through age seven while assisting their parents in strengthening their parenting skills and becoming self-sufficient productive city residents. This is no coincidence, but rather a result of concerted efforts taken by city leaders.

In 1991 under the leadership of former Mayor Alice Wolf, the City created the Coordinating Council for Children, Youth, and Families, also known as the Kid's Council. The charge to the Kids' Council is to direct the comprehensive local response to the needs of children, their families, and other caregivers, in accordance with a set of guiding principles. These principles are:

- Promote services and other activities that are preventive rather than reactive;
- Promote services and other activities that are coordinated rather than fragmented, and that result in improved accessibility;
- Encourage innovative responses; and
- Generate activities that create opportunities for all children, their families, and other caregivers.

These principles are supported by the unusual membership of the policy advisory committee which is composed of numerous city, business, and community leaders: mayor (Chair); city councilmember; school committee member; city manager; superintendent of schools; assistant city manager for human services; commissioner of health and hospitals; police commissioner; director of the public libraries; a philanthropic community member; state children, youth, and families state agency representative; business representative; early childhood community representative; and five community-at-large members. The group is unique in its diversity, and is particularly well-suited to the tasks of coordination and integration.

In 1997, under the auspices of the Kids' Council, city departments, community-based organizations, and the city's community foundation engaged in a community-wide process to identify goals that the city could focus on to improve the lives of children and families. In a process called "Setting the Agenda for Children," more than 640 residents participated in over 50 town meetings to provide input into setting goals that impact young children. The city embraced a goal that dramatically impacts the daily lives of children and families — that children and their families be able to read.

The Kids' Council is carrying out the community-set goal of "literacy for all children and families" through an effort entitled "The Agenda for Children's Literacy Initiative." This initiative along with another city program — the Center for Families — are making great strides in promoting early childhood success in Cambridge.

### **The Agenda for Children's Literacy Initiative**

While all parents want their children to learn to read and succeed in school, many parents, especially those with limited English proficiency or low literacy skills, are unsure what they can

do to help their children. With this in mind, the Children's Literacy Initiative has chosen to focus on the following objectives:

- Support parents in their role as continuous teachers of language;
- Support childcare workers and teachers in their role in developing literacy;
- Give children access to literacy resources; and
- Identify and support children who may have difficulty learning to read and write.

While most literacy programs start with books, the Literacy Initiative starts by talking. Research has shown that learning to read requires a mastery of oral language. As parents talk to their children, their children build vocabulary, comprehension skills, and the ability to identify words. This concept is at the heart of the Literacy Initiative. The following programs educate parents of children newborn to age seven about how to support their child's language and literacy development.

- **Maternity Ward Visits:** Literacy Initiative staff visits new mothers on the maternity ward at the Cambridge Hospital to encourage them to talk to their babies. Staff explains that talking, singing, and responding to babies help develop the language and literacy skills that are necessary for learning to read.
- **Home Visits:** Staff visits the homes of families with babies (newborn to 15 months). They talk to parents about the importance of bonding and playing with their baby, provide information about social services available in the community, and if necessary, link families to these resources. In addition, staff "models" techniques parents can use to stimulate their child's language development, such as playing rhyming games or singing songs together.
- **Talk Presentations:** In 2002, the Literacy Initiative launched "Let's Talk... it makes a difference," a campaign to increase awareness about the importance of oral language development in young children. During Let's Talk presentations, staff teaches parents simple techniques for interacting with their youngsters that will spur rich and elaborate conversations. All presentations are given in multiple languages.

In 2002, then Mayor Michael Sullivan kicked off the "Let's Talk" campaign by reading in the city's preschools. In 2004, Mayor Sullivan invited city officials and college presidents, including the president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, to choral read with him in his office to children from the pre-schools. In an effort to highlight the importance of reading and encourage parents to read to their children, these sessions were filmed and run on the city's cable station.

- **Reading Parties:** Using modeling techniques, staff teaches parents how to use age-appropriate books to develop their child's vocabulary and to help their child understand the correspondence between printed letters and their sounds. Parents also learn how to engage their child as an active participant during story-time. At the end of the party, the facilitator gives parents free copies of the books. Reading Parties are held in local community centers, public housing complexes, churches, and all Head Start Centers.
- **Interactive Literacy Activities:** Building on the reading party concept, staff models for parents how to have rich and elaborate conversations with their children during book-related

activities. After reading a book to their child, parents learn how to extend learning through singing songs, arts and crafts projects (such as making puppets that recreate book characters), and other activities. Events are held in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. Venues for the activities include public housing complexes, libraries, churches, and hospitals.

### **Center for Families**

Another Cambridge city program that supports children and family literacy as well as providing broader family support is the Center for Families, which began in 1994 as an initiative of the Kids' Council. Its goal is to provide fun and educational activities and resources for parents and families with children ages 0-6 in Cambridge. The primary program components are:

- Parent and child activities such as playgroups;
- Community-building activities to bring families together;
- Parent support groups and parenting education workshops;
- Information and assistance in finding resources for all family members; and
- Outreach to share information and resources with families in the community.

The Center for Families works with other groups in Cambridge – childcare centers, community-based organizations, school-based programs, multi-service agencies to bring more and better services to families with young children. Activities take place at the Center for Families headquarters, as well as youth centers, community rooms, school buildings, churches, libraries, and housing complexes. By carrying out activities in multiple locations throughout the city, The Center for Families has been able to collaborate with other organizations, expand the services offered, and reach parents and their young children in various neighborhoods throughout the city. Program activities include:

- **Moms' Discussion Group:** Being a mom is challenging. Women have to juggle their time and roles as mother, spouse, worker, and learner. This activity is designed for mothers of children ages 0-6 and it gives them an opportunity to take a break to think about priorities, share with other moms, and talk about where they want to go. Snacks and limited childcare are provided.
- **Cambridge Community Playgroups:** Cambridge community playgroups are group activities for children and their parents or caregivers to attend together. Playgroups provide developmentally appropriate activities and play for children from 1 to 5 years old, including children with special needs. Group leaders model play behavior for parents that promote social and learning opportunities for their children. Each playgroup can serve a limited number of children. A lottery is used to make sure that everyone has an equal chance of getting into the group of their choice.
- **Parent Infant Group:** This informal support and discussion group offers parents with new infants up to 14 months the opportunity to share experiences, ask questions, and meet other parents while babies sleep, eat, and safely explore in the infant-toddler room.
- **Dad's Morning Out:** Dads and kids play together and then time is set aside for dads to talk.

- **Infant Massage:** Massaging your baby gives parents a wonderful opportunity to connect with their child. Massage can also help with digestion, sleep, and a baby's health. Groups of parents with infants ages 2 months to pre-crawling are organized in locations that are convenient for parents.
- **The Renaissance Journey:** This 6-week evening group for single mothers focuses on creating a supportive community and taking the time to attend personal needs. Dinner and childcare are provided for this group.
- **Scrapbooking Class:** This monthly class for adults gives parents the tools and an opportunity to collect and preserve special things collected by family members. The 6 sessions cost \$90 which includes instruction, use of scrapbooking tools, crop talk lesson sheet, and a participant gift at each session.
- **Families of Twins and Multiples:** The Center convenes a Saturday afternoon play date with families of twins and multiples. This monthly gathering is a purely social occasion. Activities for the kids and snacks are provided.
- **Easy and Creative Arts and Crafts for Preschoolers:** This activity for caregivers and children ages 3-5 exposes preschoolers to arts and crafts so that they can use their fine motor skills and cognitive creativity to manipulate art objects and build a strong imagination.
- **Parent & Child Relaxation Yoga Class:** This class is designed for parent-child pairs, children ages 3-6 to discover and explore the joy of connecting with your child doing fun and relaxing exercises and games. Parents must register for the class.
- **Pajama Story Hour:** Parents and children come to a city library in pajamas on the last Wednesday of the month to hear stories read by neighborhood parents and enjoy a snack before bed. This is a great way to visit the library as a family, share a favorite book, and discover new favorites.

## Conclusion

Through the leadership of the Mayor Sullivan and other city officials, Cambridge has an agenda dedicated to children and youth and an increased capacity to improve child outcomes in the community. The establishment of the Children's Agenda is an example of how strong leadership can help put early care and education at the forefront of local government. By prioritizing children and family issues within his administration, Mayor Sullivan has set the foundation for Cambridge's active involvement in supporting early childhood success.

On September 26, 2005, the America's Promise Alliance announced its selection of Cambridge as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People. Cambridge and the other winners were chosen from among 1,200 entries by a distinguished selection panel of national civic, business, and nonprofit leaders. The applications required detailed information about each community's efforts to fulfill five essential promises critical to the well-being of young people: caring adults who are actively involved in their lives; safe places in which to learn and grow; a healthy start toward adulthood; an effective education that builds marketable skills; and opportunities to help others.

For more information about Cambridge's efforts, contact Lei-Anne Ellis, Literacy Coordinator, The Agenda for Children, 617-665-3827/ [LEllis@challiance.org](mailto:LEllis@challiance.org) or Jenn Kapuscik, Director, Center for Families, 617-349-3002/ [jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov). You may also visit: [www.cambridgechildren.org](http://www.cambridgechildren.org) for additional information.

## **STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT:**

### **CONVENING CONFERENCES / SUMMITS WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

NOTE: Strategy spotlights can help spark ideas that might be appropriate for your community. If you have additional approaches to contribute on this month's topic, please pass them along so we can add them to this list for future use.

By investing in young children and their families, city officials are investing in one of the fundamental institutions that make this nation great. Given the critical role that early education and family-friendly practices will play in countering economic, cultural, and social challenges, leaders are recognizing that young children and their families are vital resources worthy of investment.

Future economic, cultural, and social gains may very well depend on children being reared in healthy environments, where quality education is provided from birth onward and parents are supported in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Engaging and working with business leaders in promoting quality early care and family-friendly practices is critical to devising and successfully implementing a local early childhood agenda. One strategy that several cities have adopted to engage the business community is convening conferences and summits.

Bringing together business leaders to share information, brainstorm, and strategize is useful and beneficial to every member of the community. In these settings, participants will often learn from each other, share innovative practices, and obtain information that will inspire a community to develop early care programs and transform the culture of the workplace. Conferences and summits provide a venue in which innovative strategies can be formulated and an opportunity for recognizing and awarding those who have championed and supported children and families. Business leaders may be excellent partners for municipal leaders to champion the cause of early childhood success. These business champions, in turn, can prove critical to encouraging and securing buy-in from other business leaders to incorporate early care and family-friendly policies into their corporate culture.

### **THE STRATEGY IN FOCUS**

Convening conferences and summits to bring together large and small employers can play a vital role in formulating solutions for quality early education and family-friendly practices. These events promote discussion of the importance of investment and the direct links to improved recruitment, productivity, retention, and greater work-life satisfaction. History shows that shifts or changes in public policy related to children and families tend to gain momentum when the business community supports the changes with concrete action. Business leaders are given strategic information that reveals the key role they play in helping to further city action on early learning and family-friendly issues.

Cities interested in promoting quality early childhood education and family-friendly workplace policies can utilize the strategies and learn from the examples presented below. These winning techniques can serve as the foundation for planning and convening a conference or summit for local business leaders. These strategies may help improve early childhood success and family-friendly practices that support a balanced lifestyle for families in your local cities.

To showcase local model practices, events may conclude with an awards ceremony honoring employers that support quality early learning and are committed to assisting employees with maintaining a balance between work and family. Municipal leaders are well positioned to help communicate the importance of early education and family-friendly practices to business leaders. As public figures, they can use multiple platforms to raise awareness and discuss the importance of investing in local early education and family-friendly efforts.

## WHAT CITY LEADERS CAN DO

- **Develop a strong and clear message.** To be effective in your communications, it is critical to develop strong messages. Strong messages tell the audience what is important and how lives are affected. You should develop a clear message that you believe in, understand, and can explain to others. You want to provide business leaders with precise information about the benefits of supporting the effort. The message should convince those not on-board to invest in early care and family-friendly policies. Acknowledge those who support these policies for their contributions and encourage them to share their successful implementation strategies with others.
- **Use the “bully pulpit.”** Mayors and councilmembers are potentially presented with numerous opportunities to speak and should consider promoting early education and family-friendly practices. Through the venues of council meetings and hearings, press interviews, business roundtables, town hall meetings, and public speeches, they are able to garner support from business leaders across the city. City leaders may challenge business leaders to advocate to their peers on behalf of your issue and attend the conference or summit you are planning to convene.
- **Collaborate with others to co-sponsor the event.** Identify other groups such as agencies, organizations, or institutions to partner with to convene a successful conference that will attract a wide array of business leaders from across the city and perhaps the region. Identify organizations that are well respected in the community and have the resources to generate a positive, widespread response from the segment of the community that you want to attend your event. Consider partners that are non-traditional and that may add flavor and innovation to the planning process. Some members of your coalition may need persuading, so make sure you have researched your topic and have compiled fact sheets that emphasize the benefits of participation. To bring those parties on board, you may have to personally connect them with leaders who have successfully implemented early childhood and family-friendly policies.
- **Conduct outreach for the event.** Use a broad range of tools and media to reach the widest possible audience. Send emails or paper invitations to your contacts; post a notice on your own or related websites; contact your local community radio station for a

community service announcement or interview; get an article or advertisement in the local newspaper; make phone calls; and inform the faith-based communities and organizations that represent special populations. Consider writing a news article for a business-related magazines or journals that explains the relevance of the issue at hand and the importance of attending the conference or summit. A city leader or a member of your team may consider visiting business and civic clubs to announce the event and extend invitations. To lend credibility to your effort, identify a business champion to help market the event and the benefits of early care and family-friendly practices.

- **Publicly reward business involvement.** When communities work together to promote early learning and family friendly practices, the quality of life and future outlook improves for the entire community. More than ever before, the role of businesses is critical to a successful future. Positive recognition and reinforcement for business contributions can help secure long-term involvement and encourage other companies to consider similar involvement. By recognizing the businesses that excel, city leaders can hope to encourage more people to consider investing in early childhood success efforts. This can be carried out by identifying small, medium, and large business and publicly awarding them at a ceremony that highlights their successful practices. This can also be done by identifying gold, silver, and bronze categories. Another strategy is to publish a list or honor roll of businesses that have implemented family friendly practices in local newspapers, magazines, or on the city website.
- **Identify and create “take-aways.”** At the conclusion of the conference or summit, it is important to keep the hard work and energy of participants moving forward. City leaders may consider issuing a challenge to business leaders that will ensure that the early childhood success efforts and family-friendly policies will not remain an abstract concept or just exist on paper. Business leaders can be role models through their words and actions. The following items can support them in their efforts: a one-page document that list several ideas businesses can use to fulfill the family-friendly challenge; an informational sheet on potential resources and partners; fact sheets; specific examples of how business leaders have implemented such policies; and incentives such as decorations, posters, etc. You may be able to find sponsors to provide these materials at no cost.

## CITY EXAMPLES

- **Jacksonville, Florida.** On January 24, 2006 Mayor John Peyton and city leaders convened the business community for the first-ever Mayor's Literacy Summit to address the current and future economic impact of literacy and early education on the workforce and Jacksonville's businesses. Corporate CEOs and other senior management professionals, HR professionals, training managers, and other leaders of Northeast Florida-based companies attended the Summit. The gathering focused on the importance of literacy, what Jacksonville is doing to improve literacy, and the tie between literacy and the future success of the business community. The city presented case studies of effective programs that can be replicated and/or serve as inspiration for development of new programs that will make a difference for businesses not currently engaged in the issue.

Through a series of presentations and interactive discussions, attendees learned how early literacy will ultimately impact their businesses and received information on how they can become engaged to help find solutions to current challenges. The keynote luncheon speaker was national literacy authority Arthur Rolnick, Senior Vice President and Director of Research for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, who spoke on “Early Literacy Economics.” The event was advertised in local newspapers, community journals, flyers, and on the radio.

- **Los Angeles, California.** On November 17, 2005, 146 mayors, councilmembers, and appointed officials participated in a historic first-ever City Leaders Summit in Los Angeles County focused on why early childhood development programs are a sound investment for cities. The Summit, entitled “Building Blocks for Cities’ Economic Success: Investing in Early Childhood Development,” provided an unprecedented opportunity for elected and appointed leaders in 17 of LA County’s cities to discuss how early childhood investments can yield big economic payoffs for their cities, as well as benefit families in their communities. The Summit featured opening remarks by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, West Hollywood Mayor Abbe Land, San Fernando Mayor Julie Ruelas, and LA County Supervisor Gloria Molina.

The Summit culminated with presentations from nationally known keynote speakers, Robert Lynch, Chair of Economics at Washington College, and Rob Grunewald, Regional Economic Analyst at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank. Both speakers provided the participants with in-depth information about how early childhood programs benefit not only families but also taxpayers and communities. Their presentations included specific examples from public and private research studies that demonstrate positive outcomes for children in a variety of domains later in life. To assist local projects in enhancing child and family well-being throughout Los Angeles, The Children’s Planning Council — a countywide public/private collaborative — along with its partners have composed an early childhood action agenda for LA County’s city municipal leaders.

- **Irvine, California.** The City of Irvine supports Family Friendly Business by giving special recognition to companies that have integrated family-friendly programs into their business operations. Awards are presented at the Irvine city council meeting in early spring, and Family Friendly Business Award recipients are recognized at the annual Family Friendly Business Forum.

On May 5, 2005, the City of Irvine’s 5<sup>th</sup> Family Friendly Business Forum was held at the Irvine Civic Center. The keynote speaker was Dr. Diane Halpern, Director of the Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children, Claremont-McKenna College. She spoke on the topic, “How Time Flexible Work Policies Can Reduce Stress, Improve Health, and Save Money.” Dr. Halpern cited extensive research on the intersection of work, family, and children, which concludes that family-friendly policies make sound business sense by increasing the loyalty and efficiency of employees. Five recommendations were given to employers:

- Recognize that family-friendly is good business;
- Acknowledge how stress adversely affects worker productivity and health;
- Provide support from the top;

- Recognize that results, not face time, are what counts; and
- Organize work so that employers do not experience excessive demands and have more decision making authority as to how to get their jobs done.

The winners were: Small Company (under 100) Motorcycle Industry Council; Medium Company (100-999) Hall & Foreman, Inc.; and Large Company (over 1000 employees) Option One Mortgage Corporation. Each award winner offers programs, policies, and a family friendly business climate that set it apart in its category. For additional information visit: <http://www.ci.irvine.ca.us/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=534>.

- **Louisville, Kentucky.** The City of Louisville has established a Work/Life Alliance, which recognizes nearly 200 companies each year in gold, silver, and bronze categories for their family-friendly practices and policies. The scoring includes a number of questions about companies' assistance with child care, flex-time policies, and emphasis on parent involvement in their children's education. The Alliance honors organizations in the Greater Louisville region that strive to help employees maintain a work/life balance.

The new Work/Life Alliance Awards feature an easier application process, increased recognition for award recipients, and culminates with a recognition luncheon. The Life Award is presented to the top organization in each of three categories: companies with 49 or less employees, companies with 50 - 249 employees, and companies with 250 or more employees. The top 10 organizations in each of the above categories are listed in Business First's "Best Work/Life Balance Companies." Additional organizations who meet the criteria are honored at the Greater Louisville Inc. Work/Life Alliance Awards luncheon. Winners fall into three categories: Work/Life Balance Designations, Leaders in Providing Work/Life Balance, and Life Award winners. Awards range from being recognized at the luncheon, being able to use the Work/Life Alliance logo, posting jobs and internship opportunities on the GreaterLouisvilleWorks.com website to special acknowledgment and a profile article in GLI's Inc. a publication that reaches more than 4,500 business and community leaders.

For additional information visit:

<http://www.greaterlouisville.com/content/employer/worklife/>.

- **Bryan, Texas.** City and community officials from the City of Bryan, United Way of the Brazos Valley and Texas A&M University are planning a Family-Friendly Workplace Conference for Spring 2006. It will take place in the Annenberg Presidential Conference Center on the Texas A&M University campus. The conference will showcase best practices of family-friendly workplace policies from corporations and businesses in the Bryan/College Station area. The first-ever Family-Friendly Workplace Awards competition will also take place. Employers who are deserving of recognition for family-friendly workplace practices are currently being nominated and winners will be announced at the event. Texas A&M, the United Way of the Brazos Valley, the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, and the Bryan-College Station Convention & Visitors Bureau are supporting the event. The City of Bryan is among six communities selected by the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education and Families, or YEF Institute, to participate in the Cities Supporting Parents of Young Children Technical Assistance Project. The focus of their efforts is on establishing and expanding

family-friendly workplace policies in our community, and this upcoming conference is a key to making that happen. For additional information visit:  
<http://www.bryantx.gov/ffwc.htm>.

## RESOURCES

Early Childhood Education: A Call to Action From the Business Community — The Business Roundtable (BRT) and Corporate Voices for Working Families (CVWF) believe federal and state efforts to develop early childhood education systems for 3- and 4-year-olds must be based on a set of guiding principles that define the components of a successful system and high-quality programs. These principles are outlined and they draw on current early childhood research, lessons from K-12 education reform efforts, and applicable lessons from the nation's experience in building a voluntary system of higher education. The focus is on 3- and 4-year-old children, but both organizations recognize the importance of quality improvement efforts for early childhood programs serving children under 3. The six principles listed are interconnected and they will be used to assess existing early education programs. For more information see:  
[www.businessroundtable.org/pdf/901.pdf](http://www.businessroundtable.org/pdf/901.pdf).

### Useful websites:

Meetings.Net — Meetings.Net is the meeting industry's portal for information and resources related to planning meetings and events. The Meetings Group of magazines provides comprehensive coverage of meeting planning issues, trends, and events in five focused areas, association, corporate, insurance/financial, religious, and medical. Visit:  
<http://www.meetingsnet.com>.

EffectiveMeetings.com—EffectiveMeetings.com is an online resource center designed to provide useful information about meetings in the form of articles, tips and quizzes. It was published as an online magazine for two and a half years, but relevant and often-requested information was not easily found in the archives. In response, the site has reorganized content and converted the site to a resource center, where readers can easily access all the information they need to hold more effective meetings. For more information, visit:  
<http://www.effectivemeetings.com/meetingplanning/index.asp>.

### Publications:

*The Conference Planning Guide*, The Department of Justice, 2002. The Conference Planning Guide was developed for persons who are interested in providing education and training to professionals. The guide is intended to help develop conference planning skills and give an overview of the elements of a successful conference and common practices accepted by meeting planners and the convention industry. It was prepared under the guidance of experienced conference planners and professionals from the conference and convention industry. The goal is to promote the exchange of ideas and knowledge, via regional, state, and local training conferences. For more information see:  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/res/confguid/welcome.html>.

*Ten Tip for Getting and Keeping Business Involved: An Illustrated Guide for Early Childhood Leaders*, by Nina Sazer O'Donnell and Carter McJunkin. From The Family Institute, 2001. Ten Tips is designed to help early childhood leaders work effectively with business leaders on how to

create and sustain successful early childhood partnership. It speaks to current and future leaders who want to start, improve or expand partnerships and can be used to plan meetings and strategy sessions, to enhance staff training and leadership development, to help evaluate efforts or to spark new partnership ideas. Description if necessary. Available at: <http://www.familiesandwork.org/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=46>.

## **RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES**

**Model Workplace Supports for Lower-Wage Families.** — Corporate Voices for Working Families. This toolkit is a resource to help companies make informed decisions about supporting hourly employees with programs that reward their critical contributions. The report lists best practices used by companies and provides a guide on how to implement these programs. The toolkits is available at: <http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org/BestPracticesToolkit/Bestpractices.shtml>.

**What Works: Programs and Interventions that May Influence Outcomes for Youth and Young Children.** — The Child Trends DataBank now includes information for over 60 indicators about the types of programs and interventions that may influence particular outcomes for teens and young children. To view a complete list of DataBank indicators that include What Works tables, please see: <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/WhatWorks.cfm>.

**Children's Defense Fund, Emerging Leaders Project.** — The Emerging Leaders Project is a program designed to bring together early care and education advocates and provide them with the training, resources, networking, and technical assistance necessary to be successful agents of change at the local, state, and national levels. The Project seeks to expand and enhance the leadership and advocacy capacity of fellows and foster the development of new strategies for improving child care, early education, and school-age care policies. The Children's Defense Fund is seeking applicants for 2006. The deadline to apply is April 17, 2006. For more information, see: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/earlychildhood/emergingleaders/default.aspx>.

## **RESEARCH AND REPORTS**

***Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise.*** By: Lynn A. Karoly, M. Rebecca Kilburn, and Jill S. Cannon. RAND, 2005. Despite growing awareness among parents and policymakers of the importance of early childhood education, many children under 5 still face challenges that may impede their future intellectual, social, and emotional development. This report highlights well-designed programs for disadvantaged children and discusses how the benefits of these programs in the long run may out way the short-term costs. Available at: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG341/index.html>.

***Reaching All Children? Understanding Early Care and Education Participation Among Immigrant Families,*** by Hannah Matthews and Danielle Ewen. Center for Law and Social Policy, January 2006. This paper summarizes evidence about the participation of young children of immigrants in early care and education programs as well as the demographic and socio-

economic characteristics of immigrant families that likely influence participation.. Available at: [http://www.clasp.org/publications/child\\_care\\_immigrant.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/child_care_immigrant.pdf).

***Policy Matters: Twenty State Policies to Create Bright Futures for Children, Families, and Communities.*** Center for the Study of Social Policy, in cooperation with the National Conference of State Legislatures, January 2006. The strength of a state's workforce and the health of its communities are key to a state's prosperity. Policies that help to strengthen families can help to accomplish these goals. This report is a guide for policymakers interested in providing opportunities for children and families. The report discusses research and state-by-state policies related to a number of topics important for strengthening families and the community. Available at: <http://www.policymatters.us/>.

***The UK Commitment: Ending Child Poverty by 2020***, by Elisa Minoff. Center for Law and Social Policy, January 2006. In 1999, the United Kingdom (UK) announced its pledge to cut child poverty by one-quarter by 2004 and eliminate it by 2020. This paper examines the history of this ambitious commitment, and the progress to date. It also analyzes the components of the national effort—which range from employment supports, asset building initiatives, and child-targeted assistance to tax, welfare, and education policies—and the next steps the UK is considering to meet the goal of eradicating child poverty. [http://www.clasp.org/publications/uk\\_childpoverty.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/uk_childpoverty.pdf)

## **OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS**

- **New Reports Frown on Television and Videos for Babies.** Time Magazine reports that many of the new videos and television shows claiming to help infants and toddlers enhance their learning ability fall short of the impact that actual one-on-one interaction with a parent or a caretaker has — even if the interaction does not involve anything related to learning. The article draws on an issue brief released by the Kaiser Family Foundation in December. Visit: <http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1147180,00.html>. To see the issue brief from Kaiser, visit: <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7427.cfm>. Source: *Time Magazine*, Jan 16, 2006.
- **Social Skills Key to Toddlers' Success in Preschool.** This report finds that while the development of skills such as number and letter recognition is important for young children, toddlers with strong social skills have greater success in preschool. The report provides research and ideas on how to help young children develop necessary social skills. For more information or to view the original article see: <http://cdwire.net/cgi-bin/pub9990170781303.cgi?itemid=9990214202368&&action=viewad&page=1&placeonpage=1&totaldisplayed=1&categoryid=9950170781364>. Source: *Child Development Research*.
- **Conference Call on FY 2006 Budget Cuts.** Connect for Kids and the Coalition on Human Needs are hosting a conference call for state and local advocates on the federal budget. The call will be held on February 2 at 2 p.m. Eastern time and will provide an update on 2006 budget cuts and a preview of the issues that may arise with the 2007 budget. For more information, visit: [http://www.connectforkids.org/action\\_central](http://www.connectforkids.org/action_central). Source: *Connect for Kids*.