

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CITY NETWORK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005**

Thank you for your ongoing interest in strengthening early child care and education. If you have any questions about the network or this Update, contact Abby Hughes Holsclaw, Program Director for Early Childhood and Family Economic Success, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities at: holsclaw@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3107, or fax – 202/626-3043.

NLC NETWORK NEWS

- **Kirsta Millar, Senior Program Associate for Early Childhood Education departs NLC.**

Dear Members of the NLC Early Care and Education City Network,

I wanted to personally let you know that after much deliberation, I have decided not to return to work from maternity leave so that I can care for my son, Owen, on a full-time basis.

The decision to leave NLC and the YEF Institute was a difficult one. I have truly enjoyed my work at the Institute, and in particular, getting to know many of you as members of the NLC Early Care and Education City Network. I have consistently been impressed with the important work that you do in your communities to promote early childhood success. Thank you for your contributions to the Network and for your commitment to building positive outcomes for young children and their families in your cities and towns.

Abby Hughes Holsclaw will remain your key contact at NLC on municipal roles in promoting early childhood success.

I wish you all the best in your work on behalf of young children!

Sincerely,

Kirsta Millar

Contact information after 10/3/05: kirstamillar@hotmail.com

- **Chloe Kaplan to leave NLC to work with young children in DC school.** Chloe Kaplan, early childhood intern for the YEF Institute, will be leaving NLC to pursue work with a Washington, DC area elementary school. She will be working with very young children who have recently relocated to the US and do not speak English. Chloe will use innovative teaching methods to help these young international students learn English. NLC wishes Chloe the best of luck in her pursuits!

- **2005 National Summit on Your Cities Families a success.** Last week's Summit drew over 200 municipal leaders who are working to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in their communities. Workshop sessions highlighted the latest innovations from municipalities across the country and provided participants with strategies and ideas for achieving progress for children and families in their communities. For more information about the Summit in San Antonio, please see this week's Nation's Cities Weekly at: <http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/NCW100305.pdf>
- **NLC works with cities to reach out to the Gulf Coast.** In response to cities' desires to create personalized relationships with cities impacted by Hurricane Katrina, the National League of Cities is working with the state leagues to make those connections. Many cities would like to "adopt" a Gulf Coast city, while others are seeking to make direct donations of money, personnel, or equipment. NLC has asked all state leagues to communicate interest from their cities in a city-to-city match. The state leagues in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, working with their offices of emergency management, have agreed to make those matches.

The National League of Cities is working with the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, a non-profit foundation designed to accept donations to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the thousands of Louisiana citizens whose lives have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina. NLC hosted a meeting last week of Washington-area groups that will assist the foundation. For more information see: www.louisianahelp.org.

NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families is playing a lead role in convening a group of experts that will focus on steps to assist cities and states as they seek to respond to Katrina's impact on children and the delivery of crucial human services. The group initially will look at large-scale resource needs (from federal or other sources); information dissemination and technical assistance needs; access to specialized expertise; and more targeted (including philanthropic) responses.

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

HARTFORD, CONN. (Pop: 121,578)

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.

On May 16, 2005, Mayor Eddie A. Perez announced the *Hartford Blueprint for Young Children* as part of his plan to better the welfare of Hartford, Connecticut's 18,000 children ages eight and younger. *The Hartford Blueprint for Young Children* is a comprehensive five-year \$106 million plan that aims to enable Hartford's children to achieve success in school and in life.

Joining Mayor Perez in making the official announcement at Mount Olive Child Development Center were Commissioner Betty Sternberg, Superintendent Robert Henry, Chris Hall of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and Elaine Zimmerman of the Connecticut Commission on Children.

Although approximately \$110 million of federal, state, and city funds are currently allocated for the health and education of Hartford's youngest children, Mayor Perez does feel that this spending is inefficient. Mayor Perez feels that Hartford is falling short of adequately preparing

children for school and ensuring that they receive medical care during such important years in their growth.

Robert Henry, the Superintendent of Schools and a leader in early childhood matters, estimated that 50 percent of Hartford's kindergartners begin school unprepared. Some research shows that access to prenatal care and infant health care is worse in Hartford than elsewhere in Connecticut.

The first steps toward creating an infrastructure to support early childhood success.

Early childhood success has long been at the forefront of Hartford's vision. Since the 1950's, the city government in Hartford has operated a well-recognized early care and education program through the Department of Health and Human Services.

In 1997, state legislation created a School Readiness program in Connecticut, with Hartford serving as one of fourteen key beginning communities. The program, overseen by the Mayor's Office and a School Readiness Council, operated a program of one thousand early care and education spaces for four-year-olds. The Hartford Public Schools are a major part of this program, operating hundreds of slots located in every elementary school in the city.

Under the Mayor's direction, a team of early childhood professionals and community leaders developed the *Blueprint* to build on these existing initiatives. The plan will assist the City in expanding early care from birth to age eight, increasing family support, aiding in the transition to kindergarten, supplementing student performance in K-3rd grade, and providing a focus on comprehensive preventative health services.

The *Blueprint* includes six goals and the steps necessary to achieve measurable outcomes for young children. The goals are:

1. Universal screening and home visiting for all newborns and their families;
2. Neighborhood-based family support programs for families with young children;
3. Universal access to quality child care and early education programs;
4. Transition planning to assist families as their children enter kindergarten;
5. Strategies to promote K-3 educational excellence, including literacy and numeracy; and
6. Universal access and use of well-child and other health care services.

Regarding the *Blueprint*, Mayor Perez said, "We don't have to re-invent the wheel. We are looking to enhance it." His efforts stem from his personal belief that children must be educated, nurtured, and provided for from the moment they are born to ensure a positive future.

The Office for Young Children

In addition to the *Blueprint*, Mayor Perez has created the Office for Young Children to unite and strengthen Hartford's existing 305 programs that serve the city's children from newborn to age eight. The office includes a paid staff that will make it their goal to see that prenatal care, early childhood medical care, and preschool programs are offered universally in Hartford.

Mayor Perez has high expectations for what the Office will offer. His visions include medical professionals visiting the homes of families with children under five and enrolling families with young children in literacy courses and parenting classes. The Office will be charged exclusively with leading and driving early childhood education issues in the city.

The Office's recently appointed executive director, Dr. José Colón-Rivas, formerly the Senior Director of Early Childhood Education and Accreditation with Hartford Public Schools, reports to both the Mayor and the superintendent of the schools. He will be responsible for planning, innovation, and tracking a minimum of \$35 million in annual expenditures that the city and schools will utilize directly for early care and education.

The Cabinet for Young Children

In 2004, Mayor Perez, in partnership with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and along with the Connecticut Commission on Children and the Hartford Public Schools, asked experts in childhood education to chart a new course for Hartford to strengthen the policies and services to their youngest citizens. The Mayor urged the city not to wait until children are in kindergarten to promote their health, safety, and academic and social development.

After a seven-month review, the group presented the *Blueprint* to the Mayor, along with a significantly changed organizational leadership structure for the city to drive the plan. This structure calls for the creation of a Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children, in addition to the Office for Young Children. The Cabinet will be a group of local experts that will advise Mayor Perez and other city officials on children's affairs and policy. Cabinet members will include the superintendent of the schools, representatives of programs that offer health care, education, and philanthropic support to the city's young children, and others.

The overarching goal of these efforts is to promote education and success from birth. The City of Hartford believes that the early childhood infrastructure it is building through the *Blueprint for Young Children*, the Office for Young Children, and the Cabinet for Young Children will provide the necessary means to strengthen young children and put them on the path to a lifetime of education.

To view the Blueprint, visit <http://www.hfpg.org/matriarch/documents/BlueprintFullReport.pdf>.

For more information, contact:

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STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT: PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

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.

THE STRATEGY IN FOCUS

This spotlight provides an introduction to communication campaigns by outlining the process of developing a campaign, summarizing the existing literature on early care and education messaging, and highlighting examples of local and national parent education campaigns. Cities interested in launching campaigns may learn from these examples, and potentially streamline the process by adapting existing campaigns to meet local goals.

WHAT CITY LEADERS CAN DO

Each communications campaign is unique, but the process of developing a campaign is not necessarily unique. The following list describes the process of developing a campaign. If city leaders choose to modify an existing campaign, it is still important to go through these steps to ensure the campaign has the same goals, target audience, and impact in another location. Each step concludes with suggestions for city leaders to take action.

City leaders and staff can take the following steps to design a public education campaign:

- **Clarify the goals of the campaign.** Determining the purpose of the campaign is the first and most important step; successful campaigns have clear, simple goals. The initiative is intended to provide parents with the information, supports, training, and opportunities they need to foster early childhood success. Examples of campaign goals may include linking parents to available resources, helping parents choose child care, educating parents about how children learn, and creating tips for parents on how to keep children safe.

Action Step: Convene a team to determine the goals of the campaign.

- **Identify the target audience.** The initiative targets parents and caregivers of young children, but local teams may want to define the target audience even more narrowly. New parents need different information and resources than parents of toddlers, and parents selecting child care need unique supports from those who choose to stay at home with their children. The more narrowly defined the target audience is, the more effective the message can be. Cities may choose to develop several messages to speak to different slices of the parent audience.

Action Step: Convene a team to identify the target audience and determine if separate messages are needed to achieve the goals of the campaign for each audience.

- **Develop a clear and compelling message.** The campaign message comes directly from the campaign goals, and crafting the message is part art, part science. There are multiple polls and studies about messages on early care and education to assist cities in developing

a message. There are also examples of national and local campaigns that have translated these polls into campaigns. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, but be sure the message resonates with the target audience if adapting an existing campaign. As Deborah Popely of Popely & Company, Inc. says, “If the message speaks to you, and you’re not the target audience, it’s probably wrong.” Even one or two focus groups can help verify that the message is meeting the goals of the campaign and reaching the target audience.

Action Step: Develop expertise in message development by: hiring a communications consultant, seeking help from the communications departments at a local university, or becoming familiar with the existing literature and campaigns. Brainstorm potential campaign messages with the team and test these messages with the target audience(s).

- **Develop the campaign materials.** Campaign materials can take many forms such as radio or television ads, websites, or print materials (billboards, guides, pamphlets, flyers, newspaper ads). As a rule, print materials are the least expensive to develop and distribute and television ads the most expensive. However, television will generally have more of an impact, especially if it airs during peak viewing times. San Antonio’s *Early On* campaign refers parents to a phone number for more information, and the television and radio ads generate twice as many monthly calls as the print ads. When deciding where to focus resources, consider the impact of the communications medium as well as the cost of production and distribution.

Action Step: Develop a budget for the production and distribution of campaign materials. Contact local television, radio, and newspaper outlets for free media. Consider approaching hospitals and other businesses about sponsoring the campaign by paying for production costs. Consider which campaign materials already exist that meet the goals of the campaign and whether or not these materials can be customized.

- **Implement and evaluate.** The final steps are to implement the campaign and evaluate its progress to make sure it is meeting the campaign goals. Evaluations can be expensive, but Chicago’s *Start Early* and Houston’s *Early Connections* provide examples of surveys that show how the campaigns changed public knowledge (see links to evaluations under Local Public Education Campaigns). If the budget does not allow for a formal evaluation, informal measures are also useful. For example, ask parents who respond to the campaign (by calling a resource number, attending an event, accessing a service) how they heard about it. This can be an informal method to determine which communications medium has the most impact.

Action Step: Enlist the Mayor and other local champions to launch the campaign and incorporate the message into their public appearances. Contact the research and evaluation department of local universities about evaluating the campaign.

Perhaps the most difficult step in designing a communications campaign is developing the message. Unfortunately, there is no consensus about the best messages to use when communicating with parents. Most of the existing literature focuses on mobilizing the public and policymakers to improve early care and education policies. Still, the resources noted in the following city examples may be helpful in guiding decisions about message selection. All of these resources can be downloaded from the Internet.

CITY EXAMPLES

The following examples highlight the efforts of several cities that launched early childhood education campaigns. All of these campaigns include messages and materials that target parents, and could be adapted by another city.

- **Boston, MA** Mayor Thomas Menino started *Countdown to Kindergarten* in partnership with the public schools and other local organizations. The campaign includes a set of resources for parents to guide them as they prepare their child to enter school. The *Countdown to Kindergarten* Guide includes information on choosing and registering for school and a poster with a countdown during the months leading up to school. Children registered for kindergarten can go to any public library during the summer and receive a free tee-shirt and list of events and activities that they can attend for free when they wear the shirt. For more information, visit: www.countdowntokindergarten.org/.
- **Chicago, IL** The *Start Early* public awareness campaign built public support for investing in quality early childhood education by emphasizing the need to “start early” with all children. Using paid ads, earned media strategies, and a corps of local spokespeople, the campaign encourages legislators to approve proposals that: ensure that quality preschool is universally available for parents who choose it; give parents more choices for – and better access to – high-quality child care programs; provide better training and benefits for early childhood teachers; and support parents in their critical role. [Surveys](#) indicate a growing number of Illinois voters agree state government should do more to improve the quality of early childhood programs. The television and radio ads are available for others to use as public service announcements. For more information, contact Julie Parente, Director of Communications, at 312-516-5551.
 - View the radio and television ads at: www.voices4kids.org/campaigns.htm.
 - PowerPoint presentation on the design and evaluation of the campaign are at: <http://www.earlycare.org/pollingtonga.htm>.
- **Houston, TX** *Early Connections*, a project of the Collaborative for Children, is a community collaboration to educate and inform parents, child care providers, teachers, and the general public on the importance of early childhood development to a child’s future growth and achievement. Started in Houston in the fall of 2002, *Early Connections* is raising awareness by distributing educational messages and materials that recommend specific actions adults can take to stimulate the positive development of young children. These messages are being delivered to the general public through the media to targeted neighborhoods, public policy makers, parents, and caregivers.
 - General information: <http://www.earlyconnect.org/index.htm>.
 - Results of Houston Survey of public knowledge and potential effective messages: <http://www.earlyconnect.org/documents/ECTotalSurvey-PDF.pdf>.
- **Miami, FL** *Teach More/Love More* is a multi-media public awareness campaign sponsored by The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and United Way Success By 6 in Miami-Dade County, FL. It was developed in connection with an early childhood/pre-kindergarten initiative supported by former Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas. The campaign provides information and resources about the importance of preparing young children for success in school and in life. The campaign includes radio and print ads, a

website, and a toll-free 24-hour number that parents and caregivers can call for information on child development, choosing quality child care, and connecting to available services. The information line is available in English, Spanish, or Creole.

- General website link: <http://www.teachmorelovemore.org>.
 - For logos, radio spots, and jingles: <http://www.teachmorelovemore.org/PressMedia.asp#Logos>.
- **Portland, OR** The *Early Words: A Child is Always Listening* project is a collaborative initiative designed to emphasize everyday things parents and caregivers can do to enhance literacy and language development for children aged 0 - 5. *Early Word's* promotes the idea that talking and reading to young children during this important period increases the brain's capacity for literacy and language skills as well as lifelong learning. The *Early Words* initiative was created by the [Commission on Children, Families & Community](#) of Multnomah County in partnership with the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, the [Multnomah County Library](#), Mt. Hood Community College, the Oregon Child Development Coalition, and child development experts. The library now leads the *Early Words* initiative with these partners and others. *Early Words'* collective vision is that by kindergarten, all children will have the language and literacy skills they need to succeed in school and beyond. For more information, see: www.earlywords.net.
- **San Antonio, TX** San Antonio's Better Jobs Initiative developed a parent education and public education media campaign called, *Early On!* The City collaborated with a local TV station and local public relations firm to create the campaign. The campaign includes brochures, TV and radio spots, and billboards. This campaign also provides parents with information that they can use to foster the healthy development of their children.
- General website: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/comminit/EarlyOn/EarlyOn.asp>.
- **Seattle, WA** As part of Project Lift-Off, Seattle's early childhood initiative, the City launched *Getting School Ready!* The Foundation for Early Learning now hosts the campaign, which supports parents as their children's first teachers and promotes access to high-quality early learning environments. *Get School Ready!* includes information on parenting support, selecting child care, and parent involvement, as well as print materials in seven different languages.
- General information: <http://www.earlylearning.org/gsr/gettingschoolready.html>.
 - Website for parents and caregivers: <http://www.earlylearning.org/gsr/parents.html>.
 - Getting School Ready! Guide: <http://www.earlylearning.org/gsr/gsrguide/gsr-english.pdf>.

RESOURCES

Early Care and Education Coalition— Pyramid Communications conducted focus groups and extensive communications research on behalf of the Early Care and Education Coalition in the state of Washington. Their findings represent a fresh look at the complex challenge of convincing parents of the importance of providing quality early care and education services in a variety of settings. The findings and recommendations provide insight into the [skepticism that parents](#) feel about programs, [gender differences](#) in talking about early education and care, and prioritized messages on needs, benefits, and solutions. The Early Care and Education Coalition explores general statements about early childhood

development and recommends language to be used when talking with parents. For a summary of the findings, go to: www.earlyeducationcoalition.org/messages.php.

Frameworks Institute— The Frameworks Institute has several publications that address what they call the “critical gap” in public understanding— that the average person has a vague and misleading impression of early childhood development and what shapes it. Frameworks has pioneered the concept of “simplifying models,” and has examined how these models can help or hinder public learning about any specific social issue. Their research indicates that “school readiness” is a simplifying model that is more effective with experts and policymakers than with parents and the general public. Instead, when the target audience is parents, they suggest using the term “brain architecture” as a simplifying analogy of how development works and how experiences affect the structure of the brain. *KidsCount E-Zine Issue No. 19 – Opening Up the Black Box: A Case Study in Simplifying Models* (2003).
<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/products/issue19framing.shtml>.

For additional Frameworks documents on this topic, see:

<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/products/ecdreports.shtml>.

Berkeley Media Studies Group (2003)— The Berkeley Media Studies Group presents a practical guide to messages and communications strategies that help activate public support for early childhood care and education. BMSG gathered arguments used by advocates working on early care policies at the local, state, and national levels, and with the help of EDK Associates, tested those arguments to see how they fared against strong opposition. The result is a hierarchy of frames that gives advocates effective messages for any early care policy issue. These messages include: “support our youngest citizens”; “we can do what we put our minds to”; “with so many kids in care, let’s get it right”; “child care is early learning”; and “young brains develop at fantastic rates”. *Making the Case for Early Care and Education: A Message Development Guide for Advocates*, (2003)
<http://www.bmsg.org/pdfs/YellowBook.pdf>.

National Public Awareness Campaigns:

The following examples summarize national campaigns focused on parent education. These campaigns are designed for local communities to adapt them, with most of the materials available at no cost or a nominal cost.

Born Learning— United Way of America is partnering with the Ad Council and Civitas to create an innovative public engagement campaign that helps parents, caregivers, and communities create quality early learning opportunities for young children. This public service campaign will raise awareness of the importance of quality early learning and increase parental knowledge and skills by recommending simple actions parents can take to help their children be ready for school. The Born Learning campaign includes nationwide television, radio, and print ads in English and Spanish; billboard and transit ads in targeted areas; parent and caregiver [education materials](#) that can be customized locally; a website with tips, information, and resources for parents and caregivers; and support for community impact activities.

This national effort grew out of the Chicago “Born Learning” early childhood awareness campaign. The Office of the Mayor and the City Department of Human Services collaborated with local partners and organizations such as the Erikson Institute, Irving Harris Foundation,

Civitas, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, and Voices for Illinois Children to develop and implement the campaign.

To view the ads or receive materials, contact Penny Schildkraut at 212-984-1928 or pschildkraut@adcouncil.org or download the tools at www.bornlearning.org.

Parenting Counts— KCTS/Seattle Television, in cooperation with PBS, has developed a public broadcasting, multimedia initiative, entitled *Parenting Counts: A Focus on Early Learning*. Using content provided by the Talaris Research Institute, the *Parenting Counts* campaign disseminates research-based information about how children think, feel, and learn and supports parents with examples of best parenting practices.

The goals of the initiative are:

- Stimulate greater awareness of early learning (birth to five years);
- Promote more effective parenting and caregivers techniques; and
- Enhance parent-child relationships.

The *Parenting Counts* campaign includes on-air and print resources targeted at parents and caregivers, as well as training materials for outreach professionals. The campaign features 60-second television spots on parenting, web resources, early learning workshops, parenting brochures, and mini-grants. The entire campaign models best parenting practices and is designed in an easy-to-use and easy-to-understand format.

For more information, see: <http://www.talaris.org/parentingcounts.htm> or contact Cindi Pendergraft, Director of Marketing, 206-529-6898, ext. 303, cp@talaris.org.

Parents' Action for Children (formerly the I Am Your Child Foundation)— Parents' Action for Children is a national non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the interests of families and young children. Parents' Action develops parent education materials, connects parents with one another, and fights for issues such as early education, health care, and high quality and affordable child care. The website offers advice on parenting, as well as a forum for parents to share their advice. Parents' Action for Children sells a variety of videos/DVDs and print materials to educate parents. The I Am Your Child video series addresses critical parenting, early childhood, and school readiness issues including early bonding and attachment, quality child care, early literacy, discipline, health and nutrition, and child safety. In the fall of 2005, Parents' Action will launch a child nutrition and wellness initiative to give parents actionable information and tools to prevent obesity in their homes, schools, and communities.

For more information contact Sharon Huang at shuang@parentsaction.org or go to www.parentsaction.org.

Safe Kids Worldwide— Safe Kids Worldwide is the premier media resource for all aspects of childhood unintentional injury prevention. Founded in 1987 as the National SAFE KIDS Campaign by [Children's National Medical Center](http://www.childrensnationalmedicalcenter.org) with support from [Johnson & Johnson](http://www.jnj.com), it offers:

- Injury Fact sheet;
- News Releases;
- Expert Interviews;

- Information on the Latest Recalls;
- Film Footage than can be Edited for New Ads;
- Public Service Announcements;
- Photographs; and
- Personal Testimony.

For more information, see: <http://www.safekids.org/>.

Mind in the Making— Mind in the Making is a national communications campaign that translates the most rigorous and compelling research on learning itself, and on how children learn best, beginning with the early years. This research will be presented to the public through:

- A multi-part television series on the science of early learning (launching in fall 2005);
- Research-based tips for families and caregivers of young children;
- Radio PSAs in Spanish and English;
- Videos for families;
- A series of learning modules for teachers of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers now being field tested throughout the country;
- A series of learning modules for families and caregivers of young children;
- A book on early learning;
- Videos for special audiences, such as pediatricians, family court judges, and social workers;
- Video “lecturettes” for college and university early childhood courses; and
- Enhanced campaign and community mobilization opportunities and technical assistance, in partnership with the United Way of America, the Ad Council and Civitas for the Born Learning Campaign.

Except for the television series, these resources will be available in January 2006. Mind in the Making is a partnership between Families and Work Institute and New Screen Concepts.

To learn more about Mind in the Making, view samples of tips for families and caregivers, receive and share research information, and participate in planned conference calls, go to <http://mindinthemaking.org>.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

The School Readiness Act of 2005— Representative Mike Castle (R-DE) introduced the new Head Start Reauthorization legislation entitled The School Readiness Act of 2005, which will introduce greater competition into the federal Head Start early childhood program and use it to strengthen school readiness, increase the role of states and local communities in Head Start, and protect children and taxpayers against the abuse and mismanagement of federal Head Start funds. H.R. 2123 aims to strengthen the academic components of Head Start and remove barriers that hinder coordination between Head Start and successful state-run early childhood initiatives. For more information, please see [The School Readiness Act of 2005](#).

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections— is an effective tool for researchers and policymakers. *Research Connections* facilitates access to current research and findings,

datasets, statistics, instruments, and other analytic tools related to child care and early childhood education. *Research Connections* highlights current research; develops and disseminates materials designed to improve child care policy research; provides technical assistance to researchers and policy makers; synthesizes findings into policy research briefs; and facilitates collaboration in the field. Visit: <http://www.childcareresearch.org/>. *From the National Association of Counties.*

Launch of Center on Children and Families— The Brookings Institution launched its new Center on Children and Families to conduct research and outreach that will improve understanding of the reasons for poverty, especially among working families, as well as the potential of various policies to improve the life chances of poor children. The new Center replaces and builds upon the Welfare Reform & Beyond initiative (WR&B). The Center will be directed by Isabel Sawhill, Brookings' Vice President and Director of the Economic Studies Program, and Ron Haskins, a Senior Fellow at Brookings. Please visit: <http://www.brookings.edu/ccf>.

Advice for talking to young children about Hurricane Katrina— Cheryl Lewis, the Early Childhood editor of BellaOnline (www.bellaonline.com) writes that young children are likely to be upset by images and news reports regarding the recent hurricanes and the devastation following the storms. She offers four tips to help young children understand and process these disasters:

- Encourage them to talk and/or ask questions;
- Reassure them that what they are seeing only happened once and not each time they see a picture of it;
- Encourage them to do something to help in some way; and
- Tell them you love them.

To read the full article, visit <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art35400.asp>.

Early childhood organizations responses to recent hurricanes— ZERO TO THREE reports that although babies and toddlers are resilient in the face of trauma and other adversities, it is a common misperception that these young children will emerge unscathed. In fact, young children going through disasters can be very much affected. In response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, ZERO TO THREE has focused on helping to address the emotional and mental health needs of babies and toddlers. Resources available through ZERO TO THREE include:

- [*Hurricane Recovery Resources*](#)— Resources aimed at mental health professionals and families and their very young children impacted by the storms.
- [*Ways to Take Action*](#)— Call or e-mail your Senators and Representatives and urge them to make new resources and relax policies to support infants, toddlers and their families impacted by these disasters.

Connect for Kids has pulled together online resources for helping those affected. These resources include:

- Emergency Guidelines for Helping Victims;
- Giving & Getting Help; and
- Help with Healing

To access these resources visit: <http://www.connectforkids.org/node/3372>.

Other organizations have also compiled webpages of useful information on helping young children cope in the aftermath of the recent hurricanes:

- *Helping Young Children after a Disaster*— from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Visit: <http://www.naeyc.org/families/disaster.asp>.
- *Resolving Fears in the Face of a Disaster*— from Voices for America's Children. For more information visit: http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Childrens_Policy/Voices_2005_Agenda/Child_Safety1/Resolving_Fears_in_the_Face_of_Disaster/Resolving_Fears.htm.
- *What You Can Do*— from the American Federation of Teachers. See: <http://www.aft.org/news/2005/katrina/whatcando.htm>.
- *Helping Children Cope in the Gulf Coast*—from Save the Children. See: http://www.savethechildren.org/emergencies/usa/hurricane_katrina_index.asp?stationpub=ihpb2_emer004&ArticleID=&NewsID=
- *Helping Children Cope with Crisis*— National Black Child Development Institute; African American Parents Project. For more information visit: <http://www.nbcdi.org/programs/aapp/aapp.asp>.

There are a number of ways concerned individuals can donate to hurricane disaster relief:

- *ZERO TO THREE*— [Hurricane Relief Fund](#).
- *American Federation of Teachers*— [AFT Disaster Relief Fund](#).
- *National Head Start Association*— [NHSA Disaster Relief Fund](#).
- *Save the Children*— [Gulf Coast Relief Fund for Children](#).
- *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*— [NAACP Disaster Relief Fund](#).

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Poverty increase in the U.S— New Census data released today shows that U.S. poverty increased from 12.5 percent in 2003 to 12.7 percent in 2004. Median income remained unchanged at \$44,389. Most cities with greater than 1 million residents reduced poverty between 2003 and 2004, but rates in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and San Antonio increased over the year. In addition, some big urban counties, home to central cities and older suburbs, showed declines in income or increases in poverty. For more information, visit <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20050830.htm>.

Census Bureau Annual Report on Poverty — The Census Bureau released its annual report about poverty, income, and health insurance coverage. Analysts were startled to see poverty rise by 1.1 million people from 2003 to 2004, despite some indicators of economic growth during that period. The number of people without health insurance also rose, from 45 million in 2003 to 45.8 million in 2004. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has noted, [poverty](#) and lack of [health insurance](#) have been growing worse since 2000. Click here for percent and number of persons living below poverty, by state: <http://www.chn.org/pdf/povertydata050830.pdf>.

Study on long term effects of Brookline Early Education Program— According to a study recently published in the American Academy of Pediatrics, urban children who attended the Brookline Early Education Program in Boston between 1972-1979 have better academic

performance, higher salaries, and better physical and mental health than urban children that did not participate in the Early Education Program. The program offered education and health resources to participants and their families from birth until kindergarten. To read the abstract visit: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/116/1/144>. Source—*The Brookline Early Education Project: A 25-Year Follow-up Study of a Family-Centered Early Health and Development Intervention. Pediatrics 2005.*

OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS

- **Youth Matters in Richmond.** Richmond Chamber helps business community make the connection between early childhood programs and economic development. Like every other chamber of commerce in America, the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce strives to promote a healthy climate for business. Unlike virtually every other chamber in America, the Richmond Chamber makes support for early childhood development programs a cornerstone of that mission with its Youth Matters program. This spring, Youth Matters contributed to the success of a statewide Early Childhood Summit. [Click here for the full article.](#)
- **Increased Number of free summer meals for Detroit children.** Mayor's Time helps double the number of free summer meals for kids in Detroit. In a city where virtually every child is eligible to enjoy a free lunch all summer long, fewer children were partaking every year – not because they were not hungry, but because their parents lacked access and/or information. This summer, the number of Detroit children served by the USDA's Summer Food Service Program grew for the first time in years thanks in large part to a campaign led by Mayor's Time. [Click here for the full article.](#)
- **ZERO TO THREE's 20th National Training Institute.** The National Training Institute will be held November 4th-6th, 2005 with pre-institutes offered on November 3rd, at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC. This year's conference will focus on "Keeping Babies On The Map: Progressive Policies, Cutting-edge Research and Innovative Practices." For more information and to register online, <http://www.zerotothree.org/nti/>. – *From the National Association of Counties.*