

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CITY NETWORK
MAY/JUNE 2007**

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 (YEF Institute) at: rucker@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3004 or fax – 202/626-3043. The YEF Institute 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 your community.

NLC NETWORK NEWS

- **Hickenlooper, Smith to Keynote National Summit on Your City's Families**
The 2007 National Summit on Your City's Families, which takes place Sept. 30-Oct. 2 in San Antonio, will feature two exciting keynote speakers: Mayor John Hickenlooper of Denver and Ralph Smith, senior vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. On October 1, Mayor Hickenlooper will share lessons from his experience in building and leading partnerships that have improved local afterschool programs, early care and education, academic achievement, college access, family economic success, and youth development in Denver. On September 30, Ralph Smith will discuss his efforts to make family strengthening a core principle of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's work and the importance of putting families at the center of policies to help young people succeed.

The theme of this year's Summit is "Building Stronger Communities: City Partnerships for Children, Youth, and Families," highlighting the importance of broad-based, community-wide collaborations and the roles that city officials play in bringing key stakeholders together to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth. The YEF Institute encourages you to respond to the challenge of this year's theme by assembling a team of senior municipal officials and community partners to come to San Antonio. Cities and towns that send a team with three or more members will be eligible to participate in a special training session on Sept. 30. This invitation-only workshop will be designed to strengthen team-building skills and identify promising areas for future collaboration in your community.

Promote the Summit to Your Network

To share the Summit with members and staff in your organizational network, please download and use the following sample articles, newsletter paragraphs, logos, and ads in your organization's newsletter, journal, magazine, or web site. To order copies of the Summit brochure, contact Michael Karpman at (202) 626-3072 or karpman@nlc.org.

To learn more visit: <http://www.nlc.org/IYEF/yefsummit.aspx>.

To register view:

http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/FFACC78819A742F680C8C5EED9ECF143/IYEF_YCF_Summit_flyer_2007.pdf.

- **Upcoming YEF Institute Audioconference:** Municipal officials and city staff are invited to register for a free, hour-long audioconference to learn new ideas, strategies, and innovations to strengthen economic well-being for all families. Strong cities are built on a foundation of strong families. All families need equal access to opportunities to improve their economic well-being. To register, please e-mail or fax your name, title, organization, mailing address (including street, city, state, and zip), telephone, fax, and e-mail. No telephone registrations can be accepted. Registrations can be sent by fax to the YEF Institute at 202-626-3043 or by e-mail to iyef@nlc.org. Questions may be left on the information line at 202-626-3014. Please specify which audioconference(s) you are registering for. One day prior to the event, each audioconference registrant will receive an e-mail or fax message that will provide a toll-free, dial-in number.
 - **June 21, 2007 at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time - "Economic Opportunity for All: City Roles in Building Stronger Families and More Inclusive Communities"**

- **Adopt the Platform for Strengthening Families.** NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families*, developed by municipal officials from cities of all sizes and regions of the country, outlines four essential tasks that are necessary for sustained progress to be made on behalf of children, youth, and families. The platform also offers a menu of action steps in seven areas to provide city officials with ideas for getting started. More than 40 cities in 23 states have now formally adopted the platform and are using it as a framework to guide and assess local action and a way to highlight their commitment to helping young people and their families succeed. Cities can formally adopt the platform through a city council resolution, mayoral proclamation, or other public announcement. View the List of Cities and Learn How to Adopt the Platform: <http://www.nlc.org/iyef/a%5Fcity%5Fplatform/>.

CITY SPOTLIGHT: Richmond, Virginia (Pop.193,777)

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

Mayor Douglas Wilders' vision for the City of Richmond in the year 2020 is a city where citizens will be safe in their homes, streets, and communities; public schools will be of high quality; and the endless cycle of poverty, violence, crime and joblessness will be broken. The mayor's vision was formally captured in the Vision 2020 report that was first released in July 2005 and revised in January 2007.

To fulfill this vision, Mayor Wilders has called upon resources and support from Richmond citizens, community groups, civic organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses, and the state government. One specific area of focus is early childhood development. Specifically, Mayor Wilder calls for increased access to health care for infants and young children; assistance for parents and caretakers to ensure successful early childhood development; and expand access to and the number of quality child care opportunities through a citywide public-private partnership.

In July of 2005, the Mayor's citizen-led Human Services Committee was appointed and charged with developing a plan for Richmond residents' health and social needs. The committee issued

the Vision 2020 report with bold recommendations to turn around the negative trends facing Richmond's residents. Some of the findings of an environmental scan and research project were:

- The teen pregnancy rate is 2.8 x state average;
- The single mother pregnancy rate is twice the state average;
- 30% of children in the city live at or below poverty level;
- 30.5% of Richmond's kindergarteners were identified as needing reading intervention; and
- 38% of Richmond's 3rd graders failed the 3rd grade reading Standards of Learning (SOL).

Richmond community leaders, stakeholders, and residents recognize that success in school for children is linked to school readiness, healthy children, parental involvement, dedicated teachers, supportive communities, and public safety. Mayor Wilders formed the Early Childhood Development Initiative in response to the committee's findings and recommendations .

The goal of the Early Childhood Development Initiative is for all of Richmond's children ages 0 to 5 to be healthy, well-cared for and ready to succeed in school. The deputy chief administrative officer for Richmond's Department of Human Services appointed a strategy group early in 2006 to advise and coordinate the Initiative, and an Early Childhood Development Manager was appointed in August 2006 to serve as the chief coordinator and staff for implementing the Initiative.

Key Programs and Activities to Support the Early Childhood Initiative:

Home Visiting – In November 2006 a Home Visiting Work Group was created to network five separate home visiting programs that serve families in the city. The work group meets monthly and has

- (1) created a home visiting directory explaining the services, eligibility criteria, geographic areas served, etc. of each program,
- (2) developed a mission statement promoting improved outcomes through collaboration and continuous improvement through effectiveness and coordination, and
- (3) conducted a needs assessment identifying topics of mutual concern which will be addressed through training and the development of supportive processes and procedures.

Steps are currently underway to develop a citywide screening and referral process for home visitation services which will ensure that the highest risk families are properly referred and that families get connected to the most appropriate home visiting resource. In addition, the city is increasing the number of families that can be served through home visitation by fully staffing the Richmond Healthy Families program and contracting with Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) of Greater Richmond to serve additional families. Additional increases are anticipated through grant funds recently awarded to the Richmond region by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Quality Child Care – A targeted initiative is underway to enhance both the quantity and quality of care available to 0- to 36-month old children in Richmond through provider and parent knowledge training, evidence-based classroom curriculum training, reliable quality assessment training, and incentives for increasing infant and toddler slots. An estimated 25 parents and 130

providers and caregivers will participate in activities and training sessions under this initiative, directly impacting an estimated 660 children ages 0 – 36 months. For example, on May 3, 2007, 53 foster care parents and providers participated in “The 5 R’s for Healthy Brain Development and Social Development,” based on the nationally recognized Zero to Three Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect curriculum. Attendees received books, CDs, and other classroom materials designed to enhance young children’s social development.

On May 30 and June 1, 40 child care providers will receive three days of training on the Creative Curriculum — an evidenced-based early care and education curriculum which uses research and theory to provide a practical and easy to understand framework for working with children and their families. Forty care providers will be trained on ITERS-R and FDCRS in August to familiarize them with environmental rating scales and enabling them to self-assess the quality of their own programs.

Additionally, ten early care professionals will be trained to 85 percent reliability in the use of the environmental rating scales. Training will be provided by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina. The 10 certified assessors will have a commitment to provide services in return for the training received under this initiative. The Richmond Department of Social Services is also conducting a grassroots recruitment campaign to encourage existing and new child care providers to offer infant and toddler care, an increasing need due to recent TANF changes. Participating providers are receiving free training, equipment, and educational materials to aid in the transition to serving this group.

Public Awareness and Parent Education - The city launched its early childhood development website in January 2007 with information on resources and services available to parents and families. A parent education calendar on the website informs parents of training sessions and support groups available throughout the city to support them in the challenging task of parenting.

A parent education coordinator position has been created to promote parent education and help families register for parenting education sessions. A parent education advisory committee is currently being formed to guide the city in developing a parent education model. This committee will tap into the expertise of pediatricians, parents, educators, and others to advise city staff and leaders on the types of parent education that should be available and how best to entice parents to participate. The city, along with other community partners, received a \$500,000 grant in May 2007 from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop new evidence-based parent education programs. In addition, this funding will allow parents to attend training free of charge and provide transportation vouchers to enable parents to attend training sessions.

Preschool Registration – The Richmond Public School District was awarded a collaboration grant by the Virginia Head Start Collaborative to implement a unified system and protocol within the city for recruitment, selection, and enrollment of preschool children. The funding has allowed the Richmond Public School’s Head Start, Virginia Commonwealth University Head Start, and the Virginia Preschool Initiative to foster true collaboration in a way that benefits entire families, children, and community. The overall goal is to ensure that every child who is eligible receives quality preschool services. A unified registration process was created through the work of a Preschool Task Force with representatives from community organizations, preschool parents, and staff from each preschool program. Registration is underway at four

community locations which include Richmond Department of Social Services offices, a parks and recreation site, and the Richmond Public School Parent Resource Center.

Family Resource Centers – Each of Richmond’s nine public library branches has a family resource center containing valuable information on topics including child development, parenting, bonding with your baby, discipline, and many other topics. Thousands of dollars worth of new and updated materials, many of which are now available in both English and Spanish, were introduced in the centers in January. This year library staff is conducting 15 free parent, grandparent, and provider workshops modeling early reading strategies for the home or day care. Library staff is also assisting and instructing home visitor program staff in implementing the Raising a Reader program — a book-bag based program that encourages early reading.

The City of Richmond recognizes that strong cities are built on a foundation of strong families. All families need good information and support to get their children off to a healthy start. Through the Early Childhood Development Initiative the city has reached out to numerous community stakeholders to identify and pool resources to better serve young children and strengthen their families. Under the leadership of Mayor Wilder, elected officials and senior city staff are posed to make a difference in the lives of young children and to transform the city into a place where families with young children thrive and the city becomes a model for designing and implementing services that prepares children ages 0-5 for school and life.

For additional information contact: Barbara Newlin, Early Childhood Development Manager, City of Richmond, Department of Human Services, 804-646-7320, Barbara.Newlin@richmondgov.com.

**STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT:
USING TECHNOLOGY TO PROMOTE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICES
FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

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.

In our knowledge-based economy and rapidly changing world, city workers must have greater access to tools and resources to flourish as early care and education specialists. The continual evolution and advancement of technology continues to transform the delivery and quality of services to young children and their families. Technology can create rich and compelling learning opportunities for staff, increase productivity, and enhance service delivery for populations being served.

In cities and towns across America, elected officials and senior city staff are looking for more efficient and successful ways to service young children and their families. With state government and local municipalities being asked to do more with less, it is important that city staff have access to resources and tools that will help them prepare children for success in school and life. It is also important to provide families with the information, tools, and resources that will improve the quality of life and help make ends meet. There are numerous benefits to using technology in

planning, implementing, and evaluating city programs. They include promoting lifelong learning among city staff as well as increased ability to measure and document impact.

THE STRATEGY IN FOCUS

City governments are already utilizing various forms of technology in providing services to city residents. Specifically, the use of computers and other digital technology continues to rise in administering, managing, and improving program quality in early childhood programs. For better or worse, technology has changed the way administrators manage finances, keep records, market programs, give presentations, and train staff.

When used effectively, technology tools can enhance documentation, program management, customer service, communication, marketing, staff development, and advocacy. Today, child care programs are using technology in many creative ways. There are several technology tools that can make a difference in the early care and education arena:

Webinars

A webinar, short for web-based seminar, is very much like a conference room based seminar; however, participants view a presentation through their web-browser and listen to the audio through their telephone. A key feature of a webinar is its interactive elements — the ability to give, receive, and discuss information. Hosting a webinar requires the use of specialized software that enables presenter(s) to deliver an interactive presentation via the Internet. Software applications vary tremendously in features that may include the ability to:

- Let the audience see the presenter's computer screen for live product demos;
- Show animation;
- Recording capabilities for later playback;
- Attendee pre-registration and reporting;
- Present audience polls and questionnaires; and
- Manage live question and answer dialogs during a presentation.

Webinars can be used for trainings, presentations, lectures, workshops, or seminars. These opportunities can help ensure that city staff and childcare providers build specific knowledge and competencies around developmentally appropriate practices for young children and increase the commitment to lifelong learning. Using a webinar as a training tool enables a trainer for the city to reach a larger audience, reduce cost, and ultimately improve the performance and service of early care and education specialists.

Blogs

A blog is shorten term for weblog. It is basically a journal that is available on the web. Initially blogs were dismissed and not viewed as relevant but that is no longer the case. Blogs are now part of the American mainstream and they often have very large and intensely loyal readerships. Adding a blog to a city's existing website can pay tremendous dividends in advertising current early care and education programs and expanding community partnerships. It can also add a personal touch or human element to a city's website. The mayor may create a blog to keep in touch with residents across the city and to keep everyone up to date on early childhood services. Posting regular blog entries about what is happening in the early care and education arena in a city provides residents with information about programs, how they can access services, and they

come to see senior city staff as experts in the field. Over time a city's blog can lead to a loyal daily readership, attract residents, and increase the number of young children who are taking advantage of the services offered by the city. A blog can also be viewed as a gesture of goodwill by city leaders.

Geographical Information Systems

The scientific description of geographic information systems (GIS) technology is that it combines tabular or attribute data with spatial or geographic data to create a visual representation of the information. More simply, GIS technology creates maps. GIS is valuable because it can help present complex data or a large amount of information in a simpler format that is more "user friendly."

For years many cities and towns in America have used geographic information systems (GIS) mapping technology for a variety of purposes. City planning departments often create maps of voting precincts, historic districts, fire stations, parks, or public schools for citizen use. GIS technology can be particularly useful to municipal leaders conducting research and planning efforts around early childhood. Mapping data about young children and/or information about early childhood services and programs can help city officials identify areas of greatest need, visualize trends in population growth, facilitate the development of goals, or help make decisions about priorities for funding. GIS mapping can be an effective piece of a larger assessment of local early childhood needs and resources or an addition to a children's budget.

Moreover, mapping technology can provide a visual to increase stakeholder and city council buy-in for early care and education efforts. Because it uses a visual and spatial format to manage data and information, GIS mapping can be an important analysis tool for strategic planning on early childhood. It can help city officials better understand and interpret key data about children in ways not possible with tables and charts full of numbers.

Television and Local Cable Channels

City leaders are working in partnership with the cable industry (including, but not limited to, their local cable system, a cable network, or a state cable association) to promote early learning and expand or enhance learning opportunities for young children. Many cable stations offer a line-up of children's programs that parents trust and children enjoy while learning useful concepts and skills. A station can broadcast quality early care and educational programming and offer outreach services to parents, families, caregivers and educators to prepare young children for success in school. Many city programs have demonstrated innovation and excellence in establishing and maintaining a partnership with cable stations that is affecting substantive change in preparing students with the skills needed for success in school and in life. Local officials can help raise awareness about the importance of early learning and to promote early childhood success.

City/Community Hotlines

In February 1997 the FCC reserved the three-digit code for accessing non-emergency police and government services. It was primarily designed to alleviate the load on the emergency 911 services. Many local communities adopted and implemented a 211 or 311 service to provide access to non-emergency city services and agencies. Early on, a three-digit number was recognized as a solution to a perennial problem by providing "easy access" to community

information and referral services. In 2007, approximately 196 million Americans -- more than 65 percent of the U.S. population -- have access to 211 dialing.

The United Way is one of the main sponsors of 211 services in conjunction with state and local authorities in North America. In essence, 211 services unite resources in a central point of contact. This resource gives citizens complete access to government and community services that can improve quality of life and fulfill their needs. Information accessible through 211 or 311 may include information on child safety, health and nutrition, discipline, early literacy, and school readiness. Parents may also have access to referrals to affordable, quality child care, healthcare providers, public libraries, and other organizations that provide unique support for parents of young children. Additionally, resources such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, free or low-cost health insurance, and public transportation subsidies can be key information available to support parents. Some city service provides basic screening capabilities so that citizens can learn about programs and services they would otherwise be unaware they were eligible for. With this system in place, screening by a trained call taker might identify that a parent with a young child may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, housing assistance, job placement and services provided by nonprofit groups.

The use of computers and technology in administering early childhood education programs continues to grow each year, and the ways in which technology tools are used to manage and improve programs and enhance children's learning have expanded dramatically. City departments and key staff can serve as a city's focal point and resource for early education staff and families. Elected officials can use their influence and position to utilize city resources and garner community support to shape the city's identity as place where technology in the early care and education is valued and made available to the early education community. Elected officials and senior city staff persons are using various forms of technology to enhance existing programs and strengthen the existing early care and education infrastructure in their cities. When city leaders focus attention on these efforts, they can be an important catalysts for change.

WHAT CITY LEADERS CAN DO:

- **Enlist the help of partner organizations, city departments, and local universities.** A first step may be to meet with staff from the city department handling GIS. It will be important to discuss the purpose, scope, and capacity of a mapping an early childhood project. Before embarking on a mapping initiative, it may be helpful to meet with key stakeholders in the community who have ideas about what to map and how it would be helpful in making decisions about early childhood initiatives. Cities can solicit help from a local college or university to gather and organize key early childhood indicators and develop the maps.
- **Encourage city staff to join listservs and participate on online discussion groups and webcasts for early care and education networking and advocacy.** This may help staff network with other professionals in the field and learn about current research that impacts program development and delivery.
- **Enhance community hotline(s) and referral services.** Perform periodic updates and reviews of the city's databases of services/resources available in a certain geographical area. In addition, train the information and referral specialists to provide information,

assessment and referrals, assistance and advocacy as necessary to meet the needs of city residents. This would include training on providing follow-up on a random number of calls to determine if the information was accurate, if they received the services they were seeking and whether additional assistance is required.

- **Launch a campaign to ensure that all families in the city have access to computers.** Senior city staff can advocate for additional computers for parental use in public buildings (i.e., libraries, recreational centers) and an increase in software that promotes early learning in local day care centers. Elected officials can support parents and their young children in developing skills in using computers as a creative resource and learning tool. They can fund a laptop mobile lab where staff works alongside parents and young children and computers in specially modified vans that bring technology directly to the children and programs.
- **Enter into an agreement to help promote and underwrite early care and education programs that are featured on local PBS stations.** These programs can feature local professionals sharing ideas and information on early care and education programs and targeting various audiences. Additionally they can provide simple and practical ideas for parent, caregivers and early childhood educators regarding the appropriate use of television with small children through media literacy training. Part of this agreement may give the city permission to show these programs on the city's cable access channel and also post them on the city's website with streaming video.

CITY EXAMPLES

The cities listed below are incorporating technology into their daily activities to better serve young children and their families.

- **Jackson, Mississippi.** The city sponsors five child centers that are licensed to serve 451 children and funding has been secured to serve 339 at risk children, mostly from Jackson's inner city. To ascertain how effectively the city is preparing its enrollees for public kindergarten, the City created the "Tracking the Graduates" program. Data is collected through interviews with the kindergarten teachers, instruments for recording student information, and observation/evaluation of the students. Data is then entered into databases that can produce various charts and graphs that depict impact on specific program variables. To heighten kindergarten readiness, Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI) and Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff plans to train all service providers for four-year old children using various tools of technology to explore researched-based best practices and assessments to improve literacy development and readiness for kindergarten.
- **Jacksonville, Florida.** To help increase family awareness of the importance of reading with young children to prepare them for school, the Mayor launched a Book Club in September 2004. All four-year old pre-kindergarten students in Duval County were invited to join. Book Club members receive a free backpack filled with several reading tools and the first book in a series that will be mailed to them each month. Mayor Peyton also hosts a Book Club show on the local FOX television affiliate station every Saturday

morning where he reads each month's Book Club selection. Student co-hosts travel around the city and help young viewers understand the words and ideas from the books.

- **New York, New York.** New York has already adopted and implemented a 311 service to provide access to non-emergency city services and agencies. The types of services that can be accessed through 211 include basic human needs resources (including food banks, clothing closets, shelters, rent assistance and utility assistance), employment supports, and services for children, youth and families. New York is pushing forward on 211/311 initiatives by exploring an initiative called '311 on the Web,' which will provide a choice to New Yorkers by allowing them to manage their interactions with 311 through NYC.gov. One of the applications being developed is allowing New Yorkers to text images and video from their personal mobile devices to 311.
- **Palo Alto, California.** Family Resources is a public/private partnership between the City of Palo Alto and nonprofit human service providers and community members. The program is funded by the city, foundations, corporations and individuals. Family Resources is a comprehensive program providing information about and connections to existing services that meet family needs. Five innovative approaches achieve the city's goals of strengthening community: a website that includes a searchable database, new public internet terminals, desktop kiosks of information, an ambassador development program, and a central office hub. Family Resources made a conscious decision to reach out to people where they normally find themselves, creating a decentralized system of information dissemination and family support.
- **Boston, Massachusetts.** The city recently launched an effort to use GIS services to support early childhood initiatives. Staff from various city departments used a series of maps to analyze services and resources for children in the city. The results showed that demographics had significantly changed, there was an increase in the population of young children in some neighborhoods, there was a significant increase in Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care, and that there was a potential strain on existing resources and support services in specific neighborhoods. Maps were created to show local transit routes, child care centers, and support services critical to early care and education.
- **Lakewood, Ohio.** City staff conducted an early childhood community needs assessment during the planning stages of forming a second Family Resource Room. The location needed to be in a different part of town that served a different population that has its' own unique needs. The City of Lakewood's Cities Supporting Parents of Young Children project team conducted a parent survey through the parent resource coordinators within the public schools. The survey aimed to assess the needs of parents of kindergartners, particularly those kindergartners with younger siblings. The initial data results from the first survey were entered into a database and several statistical tests were run to determine significance and program impact. From the initial needs assessment, the team formed focus groups to further determine the areas in which parents have the greatest need. The team used several software programs to formulate charts, graphs, and tables that are being used to increase support for early education at council meetings and community forums.

- **San Francisco, California.** Mayor Gavin Newsome encourages city leaders and citizens to get involved in the community to improve the way local government does business. The city has a new blog will be an opportunity for the Mayor, department heads, and other staff to share new initiatives and programs to the general public.

RESOURCES

The National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) — NCGIA is an independent research consortium dedicated to basic research and education in geographic information science and its related technologies, including geographic information systems (GIS). The three member institutions are the University of California, Santa Barbara; the University at Buffalo; and the University of Maine. Topics of current research within the NCGIA consortium include: Accuracy and uncertainty in spatial data; Cognition; and Modeling and representation. Today, NCGIA stands as an international focus for basic research. For more information see: <http://www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/>.

The National Geophysical Data Center (NGDC) — NGDC, located in Boulder, Colorado, is a part of the US Department of Commerce (USDOC), National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service (NESDIS). They are one of three NOAA National Data Centers. NGDC's mission is to provide long-term scientific data stewardship for the Nation's geophysical data, ensuring quality, integrity, and accessibility. NGDC provides stewardship, products and services for geophysical data describing the solid earth, marine, and solar-terrestrial environment, as well as earth observations from space. NGDC's data holdings currently contain more than 300 digital and analog databases. For more information see: <http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/ngdc.html>.

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) — PBS, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, is a non-profit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 354 public television stations. A trusted community resource, PBS uses the power of noncommercial television, the Internet and other media to enrich the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services that inform inspire and delight. Available to 99 percent of American homes with televisions and to an increasing number of digital multimedia households, PBS serves over 75 million people each week. For more information see: <http://www.pbs.org/>.

Publications:

The Impact of Information Technology on City Government in the United States by Kenneth L. Kraemer, Jason Dedrick, and John L. King, *University of California, Irvine, Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations*, December 1995. The application of information technology (IT) has played a major role in the transformation of urban governments over the past 30 years and is likely to have even greater effects in coming years. In this paper the authors discusses a number of possible scenarios that might develop as information technologies continue to evolve and as innovative applications of IT are created. In addition, this paper builds upon current knowledge about the impact of information technology on the management of city government. The purpose is to construct a picture of the changes occurring in city government that provides us with guidelines for making predictions about the role of IT in the management of city government in the near future.

<http://www.crito.uci.edu/research-archives/pdf/toulouse.pdf>.

Technology Makes City Agenda: New Mayors Value IT and Want Effective E-governments by Sandra Swanson, InformationWeek , February 4, 200. A new breed of mayors concerned about numerous public issues are putting IT initiatives near the top of this year's agenda for more city governments. Several have hired or are looking for people to head their IT operations. Some of the new mayors are from a younger generation than their predecessors and are more comfortable with technology. The article looks at how several new mayors are implementing technology to improve essential services as well as human service programs. Mayors from Detroit, New York, and Cleveland, are also looking at ways city workers can better communicate with each other and deliver quality programs and services.

<http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=6500372>.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

Supporting Early Literacy in Natural Environments: Activities for Caregivers and Young Children — Free parent-child activity materials are available for downloading at the Washington Learning Systems website. These materials include forty-six home and community activities for adults and preschool children that encourage early language and literacy development in young children. They are appropriate for children with disabilities as well as children who are developing typically. Five files for each language (Spanish and English). Each of the forty-six activities includes 1) An activity description, 2) Hints for making the activity fun and developmentally appropriate, and 3) A brief self-evaluation form that cues parents and other caregivers to notice their children's skills, and also cue adults to examine and grow their own interactions with their children. The materials are specifically designed to address the three key skills of 1) language development, 2) phonological awareness, and 3) general print awareness. To download materials go to www.wlearning.com and click on the purple button that says "Free Parent Education Handouts" on the home page.

Beyond Child Care Centers: Infant and Toddler Child Care — Infant and Toddler Child Care offers recommendations that reach beyond child care centers to strengthen Connecticut's early care and education reform agenda so that it addresses the complicated needs of families with infants and toddlers. To learn more visit: http://www.ctkidslink.org/pub_detail_335.html.

11 Essential School Readiness Skill Sets — The Arlington, Texas Child Care Council has developed a list of skill sets that children can be expected to have when they have the appropriate environments and experiences to support their development. For additional information, go to <http://www.tcy4kids.org/index.cfm?action=page&page=45> and click on Download the ACCC 11 Essential School Readiness Skill Sets. The skill sets are listed on pages 4 and 5 of the report.

Why Child Care Matters to Working Families: Text from a Briefing for House Staff — Former welfare recipients with young children are 82 percent more likely to be employed after two years if they receive child care assistance, according to the National Women's Law Center (NWLC). NWLC is calling on the feds to increase funds for child care -- as you can see in this recent statement by NWLC's Helen Blank. http://nwlc.org/pdf/SenateBriefingHelen_April-30-2007.pdf.

Teacher-to-Teacher Early Childhood Education Summer Workshops — The U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative is collaborating with prominent teachers and school district officials to convene summer workshops designed specifically for early childhood educators. These workshops provide professional development opportunities in specific content areas and include research-based practices that teachers across the country have applied in their schools and classrooms to ensure academic achievement for all students. The workshops will be held in Albuquerque, N.M. on June 5-6, 2007 and in Louisville, Ky. on July 19-20, 2007. For more information visit:
<http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html>.

The Fourth KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot — The snapshot highlights the 15.7 million children in immigrant families living in the United States. Although 80 percent of these children were born here and are entitled to the same support other citizen children receive, "linguistic isolation and lack of economic resources put children in immigrant families at greater risk of growing up without the opportunities they need to succeed." See how your state rates and learn more, in this online brief. To order a print copy from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, contact Carol Rickel at:
http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/snapshot_immigrant.jsp.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Pre-K in the South, by Lauren Veasey, the Southern Education Foundation, 2007. The report takes a fresh look at state-funded preschool education in the broadly defined 15-state region that includes Oklahoma and Delaware. Drawing on NIEER's 2005 State Preschool Yearbook and a host of other research, the report makes some striking points. The report is available at:
<http://www.sefatl.org/pdf/Pre-KSouthReport-Final.pdf>.

Cost-Benefit Study of Pre-K, by Robert G. Lynch, the Economic Policy Institute, 2007. The report examines costs and benefits to society of two scenarios, one in which public preschool education is made available to all children and one in which programs are targeted to disadvantaged children. According to the author total annual benefits of a universal program would begin to pay for the program within nine years and would do so by growing margins each year thereafter. The payoff for targeted programs would begin in six years with the margin growing yearly thereafter. While returns would vary by state, universal pre-K programs would yield higher returns by the year 2050. The report is available at:
http://www.epi.org/books/enriching/mediakit/lynch_fact_sheet.pdf.

State Early Childhood Policies: Improving the Odds, by Helene Stebbins and Jane Knitzer, the National Center for Children in Poverty, May 2007. The report offers detailed information on state policies in the areas of child development and school readiness, quality child care, and parenting supports -- and finds that most low-income children don't get the support they need. The report highlights some of the key findings from NCCP's database of state policy choices, which assembles data from multiple sources to provide a unique picture of early childhood policies across the states. The report is available at:
http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_725.pdf.

Children in Immigrant Families - The U.S. And 50 States: National Origins, Language, and Early Education by Donald J. Hernandez, Nancy A. Denton, and Suzanne E. Macartney, State

University of New York at Albany and Child Trends, April 2007. This research takes a fresh look at the distribution patterns, origins, language skills and pre-K participation rates for immigrant families in the U.S. The report draws on new results of Census 2000 data to take a closer look at children in immigrant families, that is, children with at least one foreign-born parent. In particular, it highlights the proportion, dispersion, national origins, language, and early education of children in newcomer families, both for the United States as a whole and in various states. The report is available at:

http://mumford.albany.edu/children/img/Research_brief_1.pdf.

Million Dollar Babies: Why Infants Can't be Hardwired for Success by Sara Mead, Education Sector, April 2007. The report calls into question the "new conventional wisdom" that adults can make infants and very young children smarter or more successful by exposing them to the host of practices and products intended to do so. The author claims that early education advocates have been overly eager to cite rapid growth in brain activity in the early years as justification for early education programs. She points out that the strongest evidence of positive long-term impacts from social programs such as high-quality preschool education takes place "outside the zero-to-three window." To read the article visit:

http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/Million_Dollar_Babies.pdf.

The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds by Kenneth R. Ginsburg, American Academy of Pediatrics, January 2007.

This report addresses a variety of factors that have reduced play, including a hurried lifestyle, changes in family structure, and increased attention to academics and enrichment activities at the expense of recess or free child-centered play. The report offers guidelines on how pediatricians can advocate for children by helping families, school systems, and communities consider how best to ensure play is protected as they seek the balance in children's lives to create optimal development. The report is available at:

<http://www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf>.

Village Building and School Readiness: Closing Opportunity Gaps in a Diverse Society by Charles Bruner, Michelle Stover Wright, Syed Noor Tirmizi, and the School Readiness, Culture, and Language Working Group of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, The State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN), January 2007. SECPTAN recently published a new report that focuses on special issues and opportunities for building early learning systems in communities of families who reflect significant cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity. The report is available at: <http://www.cfpciowa.org/pdf/VBSR.pdf>.

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States by Kelly L. Maxwell, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's FPG Child Development Institute, 2006. The report provides a detailed picture of the nation's early childhood teacher preparation programs. The national report is accompanied by 45 state reports. The reports provide basic descriptive information about program, faculty, and student characteristics of early childhood teacher preparation programs. The report is available at:

http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/pdfs/national_report.pdf.

The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children by James J. Heckman and Dimitriy V. Masterov, The Institute for the Study of Labor, April 2007. This paper presents the case for investing more in young American children who grow up in disadvantaged

environments. The paper argues that, on productivity grounds, it makes sense to invest in young children from disadvantaged environments. The article is available at:
<http://ftp.iza.org/dp2725.pdf>.