

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CITY NETWORK
MAY/JUNE 2006**

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), National League of Cities at: rucker@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3004 or fax – 202/626-3043. 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

- **Free Audioconference: “A Most Precious Resource: Keys to City Support for Parents of Young Children.”** The audioconference will explore the importance of the early years and how supporting parents is a key strategy to ensure that children are reared in environments that promote learning and facilitate successful development. City leaders will discuss how they capitalize on their influence and visibility with the general public and other policymakers to foster widespread support for local action on supporting parents and the importance of early care and education. Please join us and for more detailed information and registration, please visit: <http://www.nlc.org/IYEF/events%5F%5F%5Faudioconferences/>.
- **Workplace Policies Support Families, Help Economy in Bryan, Texas.** The City of Bryan, Texas, recently hosted its first-ever Family-Friendly Workplace Practices Conference to recognize businesses that help their employees balance life and work demands, and to encourage more businesses to follow suit. To read more about the Family-Friendly Workplace Conference in Bryan Texas, click on the following link: http://www.nlc.org/Newsroom/Nation_s_Cities_Weekly/Weekly_NCW/2006/05/08/9837.cfm.
- **Enfield, Conn., Launches New Early Childhood Initiative.** On April 6, Mayor Patrick Tallarita kicked off Enfield’s early childhood public education campaign, *Key Initiatives to Early Education* (KITE), to ensure that all families with young children have knowledge of and access to quality early care and education opportunities. To read more about KITE, visit: <http://enfield-ct.gov/content/91/115/5095/5923.aspx>.
- **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 essential tasks that strengthen families, improve outcomes for children and youth, and sustain community 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 or 202-626-3072. Click on the following link to view and adopt the platform: <http://www.nlc.org/iyef/7915.cfm>.

- **Free Recorded Audioconference: “Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves.”** On May 31st, NLC’s National City Network (NCN) hosted a web chat that discussed how local officials can better prepare their cities against natural disasters. Natural Hazards such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, can cause billions of dollars in damage when they happen. Kathleen Tierney, from the University of Colorado Natural Hazards Center, described how locally elected officials can better deal with disasters in their cities through better forms of preparation. At no charge, you can register and listen to the recorded session at: www.nationalcitynetwork.org.

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND (Pop: 636,251)

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.

Baltimore is rich in collaborative efforts that are designed to ensure that the city is a great place to live for children, youth, and families. These collaborations involve city agencies and individuals from the public sector, as well as the non-profit community, foundations, and private citizens. At the helm is Mayor Martin O’Malley, a strong leader in this work to provide a quality and accessible system to address the needs of all children and their families and to improve their outcomes and well-being.

The Family League of Baltimore City

In 1991, an entity known as The Family Preservation Initiative (FPI) was born. It was created to provide leadership in the development and implementation of a coordinated interagency service delivery system for the families and children in Baltimore City. In 1997, FPI became The Family League of Baltimore City, Incorporated (FLBC).

At the city level, the Mayor designated FLBC as the primary governance entity for service to families and children. In this leadership capacity, FLBC has the pivotal role of drawing together Baltimore’s stakeholders for the purpose of weaving a comprehensive web of services and opportunities for the city’s children and families. The Board of Directors expansion to represent fully city governmental agencies, local businesses, the non-profit and faith communities, and its youth and parents, strengthened FLBC further.

Since the late 1990s a nonprofit organization, Safe and Sound Campaign, and the Family Support Strategy Initiative have been leading the way in supporting and providing quality resources to improve the lives of young children and their family members.

Setting Priorities to Support Baltimore’s Children

The Safe and Sound Campaign organized a citywide summit to educate the community about the conditions characterizing Baltimore children’s lives and to have citizens vote to identify the city’s priority goals for children and youth. The organization took the top five priorities voted upon by city residents and crafted detailed blueprints designed to change these conditions. These citywide strategies have been implemented in neighborhoods throughout the city where data has shown the need to be greatest. To date, more than \$100 million dollars has been raised and leveraged to increase quality opportunities, ensure accountability, and measurably improve conditions for children and youth in Baltimore.

Family Support Strategy Initiative

Baltimore's Family Support Strategy Initiative helps foster healthy, nurturing, and self-reliant families with children that enter school ready to learn. This initiative supports communities to create localized comprehensive networks of programs, services, and supports for families with young children, from birth to six years of age. Through this community-based process, localities bridge existing resources and develop new resources that focus on four key areas of family support:

- Home-based services that bring information and expertise directly to families, including case management, parent education, and advocacy;
- Center-based services that allow for neighborhood-based hubs of support for families and their young children;
- Service linkage to quality health care, early childhood care and education, substance abuse treatment, social services, and job skill development and placement; and
- Other formal and informal activities that enhance a community's ability to cherish and nurture young children.

Fifteen communities participated in a planning process to develop family support strategies based on local strengths and needs. Seven communities received planning grants to develop local strategies and were subsequently funded for implementation of those strategies. Millions of dollars have been raised from multiple sources to support this initiative.

Baltimore's Key Early Childhood Programs & Activities

The City of Baltimore supports young children and their families through several additional programs and activities. Those programs and activities include:

- **Success By 6:** To ensure that Baltimore's children are born healthy, live in safe and nurturing families, and enter school ready to learn, the Success By 6 Partnership offers a good start to families and children up to age six in select city neighborhoods. The program delivers intensive home-based services to pregnant women and parenting families; offers support for adult skill building; and coordinates and links services mental and health care for families. Several outreach activities promote communities and families that nurture young children.
- **Baltimore City's Countdown to Kindergarten:** The campaign promotes school readiness and awareness about the importance of early childhood experience from birth to five years. This initiative strives to: increase public understanding about the importance of learning in the early years; provide parents, other caregivers and community stakeholders, with practical, "actionable" information along with the inspiration and support to follow through; and build the political will among the general public to make necessary investments in programs that benefit young children.
- **The Maternal and Infant (M&I) Nursing Program:** The M&I Nursing Program provides home visiting and case management services to high-risk pregnant women and infants in the city. Referrals are made primarily by prenatal care and pediatric providers and hospitals; self-referrals can also be made. Services are provided by community health nurses, social workers and community outreach workers include:
 - assistance with making and keeping prenatal care and pediatric appointments;
 - care coordination with medical providers;
 - guidance and support throughout the pregnancy and infancy;

- parenting assistance and child development guidance;
 - family planning education, counseling and services;
 - screening and treatment referrals for sexually transmitted infections; and
 - referrals to other needed services.
- **ABC's of Safe Sleep Initiative:** The Baltimore City Health Department is reaching new parents throughout the city quickly and inexpensively with life-saving infant safe sleep messages printed on delightful baby t-shirts, often referred to as “onesies.” The onesie, is an essential component of the ABC's of Safe Sleep Initiative, launched in 2004 to educate parents on the risks of unsafe sleep environments. Together with community partners, the Health Department is promoting the life-saving message that an infant sleeps safest *Alone, on his/her Back, in a Crib*. The initiative distributes educational onesies as part of safe sleep counseling, and is raising funds to purchase cribs for families in need.
 - **Reach Out and Read (ROR):** Baltimore is one of many cities that have initiated ROR within the pediatric practices serving its city's children. Through this program, doctors and nurses are trained to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud, and to give books to children at pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age, with a special focus on children growing up in poverty. In the Greater Baltimore area, there are 32 Reach Out and Read sites that distribute more than 40,000 books each year. ROR services are provided to every child ages 6 months to 5 years of age, who receives well-child check-ups at participating ROR sites.

For more information about Baltimore's efforts, contact Barbara Squires, Assistant Commissioner, Maternal and Child Health, City of Baltimore, 410-396-4428, Barbara.squires@baltimorecity.gov. For additional information, you may also visit www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/health/Child.html.

**STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT:
ENCOURAGING HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH SERVICES AND PROMOTE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT**

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.

A plethora of research has significantly advanced our appreciation and understanding of the importance of early life experiences. The potential to improve developmental outcomes in children through quality and comprehensive health services is now well established. Because many children under 5 years of age receive some sort of medical services, the healthcare setting is an ideal place to provide parents with specific strategies, resources, and information that can help them boost their child's development and spark successful early learning.

It is critical that young children receive quality healthcare early in life. Physicians and medical providers are trusted sources for parents and thus an excellent path to providing parents with critical information needed to boost early learning. Local elected officials are in a good position to reach out to physicians to encourage them to join city efforts to promote successful early childhood development.

THE STRATEGY IN FOCUS

The health and welfare of children depend on the ability of families and their community support systems to foster positive emotional and physical development. Members of the medical community, specifically pediatricians, are uniquely positioned to serve as family advisors and community partners in supporting the well-being of children and families. Pediatricians can serve as family health advisors during the formative period of a child's development and during crucial developmental stages throughout childhood and adolescence. Pediatricians skilled in assessing family needs, strengths, and situations, along with counseling to offer strategies and resources to families are a vital resource for families that are faced with various economic, social, and physical challenges. Additionally, pediatricians and nurses have the opportunity to recognize the manifestations of stressors in parenting, evaluate the risks involved, and determine the necessary interventions.

To further promote early learning, cities can reach out to healthcare professionals and alert them to resources and programs in the community that they may want to promote to parents of young children. These programs may include: home visitor programs for families with newborn infants, family preservation programs for abused and/or neglected children at risk for foster care placement, parent education groups, play groups for preschool children, drop-in centers for parents of young children, comprehensive early childhood education programs (e.g., Early Head Start, Head Start), early screening and referral programs, and crisis care programs.

Local government officials can play a key role in encouraging medical professions to play a pivotal role in delivering a variety of services that promote the physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being of their youngest patients. City leaders can help ensure that quality and comprehensive health services are available and being provided for young children. Here are some key steps that city leaders can take:

WHAT CITY LEADERS CAN DO

- **Bring together members of the health/medical community to promote and highlight benefits of comprehensive approaches to child health.** City officials have the opportunity to promote a common vision for improving comprehensive quality health care for young children. City leaders are uniquely positioned to convene key members of the health community and to highlight the benefits of health prevention for young children. Use this opportunity to inform medical providers and health workers who have direct contact with families about specific outreach activities and opportunities to serve as community partners to promote comprehensive well-being of children.
- **Engage in an ongoing and collaborative partnership with local health care providers.** Work with members of the medical community to support, encourage, and shape the quality of comprehensive care for very young children. This may lead to the development of a joint health service plan that outlines specific intervention strategies oriented toward improving child health. The plan should include identifying and coordinating care for families in need of more extensive social support services.
- **Educate health care providers about community programs and existing resources.** Many physicians and medical staff report that they lack information about referrals, community programs and resources. You may consider organizing opportunities where

social service providers and health care professionals share information about services available to young children and families. By creating fact sheets, information can be readily available to health care workers as they conduct medical screenings.

- **Promote effective communication between parents and health care providers.** You may consider convening a joint educational session between medical doctors and parents. Pediatricians and health care workers can provide family support by engaging in a relationship with parents based on collaboration and shared decision making. Convene an educational session where both parents and providers can listen to concerns and barriers and reach a consensus as to what types of services are most needed.
- **Encourage the formation of a community-based family support program.** Encourage health providers to participate in a community-based family support program to help parents secure the knowledge, skills, and support they need to raise healthy children. Health care providers can provide technical advice on health, safety aspects, and how to best contribute to the healthy development of children. Much can be accomplished by inviting providers to attend or participate in local recreational, social, educational, civic, or philanthropic activities and associations.

CITY EXAMPLES

The cities listed below are reaching out and engaging medical professionals in providing comprehensive health services to young children and their families. Members of the medical community are engaged in innovative practices and service delivery to improve the quality of life for their patients. These efforts launched out of city departments and supported by municipal leaders lay the foundation for comprehensive health services that promote an environment that leads to optimal development in every area of life.

- **Chicago, Illinois.** Starting in January 2004, the Chicago Department of Public Health increased its nurse visits from 11,000 to 17,000 a year. This effort began by offering home visits to young at-risk mothers who deliver their children at Stroger, University of Chicago and Illinois Masonic Hospitals. The Chicago Department of Human Services is working with pediatricians from major hospitals like Children's Memorial and Northwestern University and city clinics to enhance outreach programs that help parents recognize such basic health problems like asthma, lead poisoning and diabetes.
- **Charlotte, North Carolina.** The City of Charlotte Mecklenburg County Public Health Department provides the Intensive Home Visiting – SmartStart @ Home program for pregnant women and their families who are expecting their first child. While mothers are pregnant, a medical nurse and child educator visits parents at home, on the job, at the clinic at least once a month. After the birth of the baby these visits continue. In addition, the Maternity Care Coordination program services are provided by registered nurses and medical social workers in a clinic setting and through home visits. These services are provided until 60 days after delivery.
- **Seattle, Washington.** The Child Care Health Program offers health promotion and disease prevention services to child care facilities throughout Seattle and King County. The staff includes public health nurses who provide consultation on health and safety issues. The child psychologist provides expertise and workable solutions for child behavior issues. Nutritionists and health educators complete the team, providing families

with consultation, nutrition advice and expertise, as well as training opportunities and a variety of health and safety education materials.

- **Nashville, Tennessee.** The Success By 6 Mobile Clinic conducts hearing, speech/language, vision, dental, and health/developmental screenings for children ages 6 months to 5 years. The mobile clinic is comprised of a team of medical professionals who travel to child care sites in Nashville and Davidson and surrounding counties. The Immunization Program works closely with pediatricians throughout Nashville to ensure that children age birth to 24 months are receiving the recommended series of immunizations. Oral Health Services also provides preventive dental services to children in selected schools in Davison County. These services include dental sealants, dental screenings, dental examinations and oral health education.
- **San Francisco, California.** The Maternal and Child Health Division promotes the health and well being of women of childbearing age, infants, children and adolescents who are at increased risk of adverse health outcomes. These activities include community assessment, planning, evaluation, outreach, advocacy, education, training, and policy development. Clinical health care services include nutrition, reproductive health, dental health, and primary care for children and youth. Prenatal Services improve the outcome of pregnant women and there is close coordination between the Prenatal & Pediatric Social Workers Group. Staff conduct trainings and provides technical assistance to obstetric providers.

RESOURCES

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau — The Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) oversees five major programs that address the health needs among the maternal and child populations in the state. These programs include: Child, Adolescent and School Health; Data Resources; Immunizations; Oral Health; Reproductive Health; and Women, Infants and Children (WIC). The Bureau addresses preventive efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and support for at-risk families. For more information see: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/about/default.htm>

American Academy of Pediatrics — American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 60,000 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The organization provides general information related to child health and describes the Academy's many programs activities, policy statements and practice guidelines, publications and other child health resources. For more information see: <http://www.aap.org/about.html>.

The Commonwealth Fund — The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation that aims to promote a high performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, minority Americans, young children, and elderly adults. For more information see: <http://www.cmwf.org/>.

Useful websites:

Bright Futures — Bright Futures, initiated by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) over a decade ago, is a philosophy and approach that is dedicated to the principle that every child deserves to be healthy, and that optimal health involves a trusting relationship between the health

professional, the child, the family, and the community. As part of this initiative, *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* was developed to provide comprehensive health supervision guidelines, including recommendations on immunizations, routine health screenings, and anticipatory guidance. For more information visit: <http://brightfutures.aap.org/web/aboutBrightFutures.asp>.

Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children — The Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children (HTPCP) stimulates innovative community-based programs that employ prevention strategies to promote access to health care for mothers and children. For more information visit: <http://www.aap.org/commpeps/htpcp/index.html>.

Doc for Tots — Docs For Tots is a nonpartisan, advocacy organization formed to encourage more doctors to fulfill their important role as active advocates for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers on the national, state and local level. For more information visit: <http://www.docsfortots.org>.

Reach Out and Read — Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national non-profit organization that promotes early literacy by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud in pediatric exam rooms across the nation. The ROR program provides the tools to help promote children's developmental skills and later school success. For more information visit: <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>.

Publications:

Improving the Delivery of Health Care that Supports Young Children's Healthy Mental Development: Early Accomplishments and Lessons Learned from a Five-State Consortium, by N. Kaye, National Academy for State Health Policy and The Commonwealth Fund, April 2006. . The paper outlines five states' efforts to improve care. Available at: http://www.cmwf.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=367138.

How States Are Working with Physicians to Improve the Quality of Children's Health Care, by H. Pelletier, National Academy for State Health Policy and The Commonwealth Fund, April 2006. . States are increasingly interested in working with physicians, provider organizations, and other entities to support efforts aimed at improving the quality of children's health care, particularly for those children who are underserved and members of at-risk populations. Available at: http://www.cmwf.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=367174.

Quality of Preventive Health Care for Young Children: Strategies for Improvement, by Neal Halfon, M.D., M.P.H., Moira Inkelas, Ph.D., M.P.H., Melinda Abrams, M.S., and Gregory Stevens, Ph.D., M.H.S., The Commonwealth Fund, May 2005. . In the National Survey of Early Childhood Health, conducted in 2000, most parents received counseling on traditional topics like immunization and nutrition, up to one-third reported they did not receive counseling on important developmental and behavioral topics like discipline and toilet training. To improve the quality of early childhood health care, the authors recommend national standards, enhanced reimbursement, improved provider training, and a strategy of raising parents' expectations of pediatric care. Available at: http://www.cmwf.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=275484.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

The Early Childhood Professional Award— Scholastic Publishing Company seeks early childhood professionals who demonstrate a commitment to excellence as educators of young children to receive Early Childhood Professional Awards. For more information about eligibility and prizes, visit: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/ect/ecpa.htm>. All entries must be postmarked by June 30.

2006 Child Well-Being Index— The Brookings Center on Children and Families along with the Foundation for Child Development and Duke University released the 2006 Child Well-Being Index, which tracks changes in the well-being of children and youth since 1975. The Well-Being Index is available for download at: <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060328.htm>.

Family Strengthening News— Family Strengthening News is a monthly e-newsletter produced by the Family Strengthening Policy Center, an initiative of the National Human Services Assembly funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Center aims to make family strengthening a priority by mainstreaming neighborhood-based, family-centered practices, programs and policy. The monthly e-newsletter highlights research, current news in the field, legislative alerts, organizational profiles, and issue briefs. You can sign up for the newsletter at: <http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/>.

Cost of Quality Early Care — The Finance Project is pleased to share with you a new strategy brief: *A Guide to Calculating the Cost of Quality Early Care and Education*. This brief lays out a step-by-step process for helping users determine accurate estimates of the cost of high-quality early care and education systems. A case study example highlights how one locality used this process to generate cost estimates. The document is available at: <http://www.financeproject.org/publications/costguide.pdf>.

Request for Proposals—The NGA Center for Best Practices announces a Request for Proposals for a new project, Supporting Gubernatorial Leadership for Building Early Childhood Systems (formerly Supporting Gubernatorial Leadership for Building Early Care and Education). The RFP is available to download at <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0605EARLYCHILDRFP.PDF>.

PNC Foundation's Grow Up Great Grants— As a component of PNC Grow Up Great, the PNC Foundation is working with Head Start Programs in Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington, D.C. to establish PNC Grow Up Great Demonstration Projects. For this, the PNC Foundation will provide grants of \$20,000 to \$50,000 for Head Start Demonstration Projects. These projects will stand as models of achievement in each of the eight domains of children's learning and development. The RFP is available to download at http://www.pncgrowupgreat.com/pdfs/2006growupgreat_rfp.pdf.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

The Effects of Investing in Early Education on Economic Growth, by William T. Dickens, Isabel V. Sawhill, and Jeffrey Tebbs. From *The Brookings Institution*, April 2006. A recently released study of how early childhood investment impacts future economic growth, found that investment in high-quality universal pre-kindergarten could increase the annual U.S. GDP by \$2

trillion by 2080. The report goes on to note that while the cost of a national pre-kindergarten program would likely cost about \$59 billion, but the benefits of such a program would exceed the cost numerous times. To read this report, visit the Brookings Institution at: <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb153.htm>.

Trends in Service Receipt: Children in Kinship Care Gaining Ground, by Regan Main, Jennifer Ehrle Macomber, and Rob Geen. From The Urban Institute, April 2006. This publication reports a decline in the number of children living in kinship care that are impoverished. This publication reports on other trends for children in kinship care, using children living with their parents as the baseline for comparison. To learn more, visit: <http://www.urban.org/publications/311310.html>.

Implementing the TANF Changes in the Deficit Reduction Act: 'Win-Win' Solutions for Families and States, by Sharon Parrott, Liz Schott, Eileen Sweeney, Allegra Baider, Evelyn Ganzglass, Mark Greenberg, Elisa Minoff, and Vicki Turetsky. From the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Center for Law and Social Policy, May 2006. This publication discusses, among other issues, the implications of changes to TANF, child care, and child support provisions. For more information: <http://www.clasp.org/publications/tanfguide.pdf>.

Breaking the Piggy Bank: Parents and the High Price of Child Care, from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, February 2006. This new report finds that the cost of sending children to child care exceeds the cost of college in 42 states. In Wyoming, a full-time student pays \$2,208 in tuition, on average, whereas the average preschool in that state costs about \$5,438 annually. To learn more about the findings in this study, visit: <http://www.naccrra.org/policy/index.php?program=8>.

Free to Read from Free to Grow, 2003. This report responds to the early childhood field's intense policy focus on reading readiness. Researchers explore the relationship between Free To Grow's efforts in family and community strengthening and literacy outcomes. http://www.freetogrow.org/news_keywords3354/news_keywords_show.htm?doc_id=358808

OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS

- **No education benefits from videos, group says.** The Campaign for a Commercial-Free America recently filed a complaint with the FTC against producers of videos such as Baby Einstein that claim to have educational benefits for infants and toddlers. The Campaign argues that the companies do not have research to support their claims and has requested that a label bearing the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation that that children under the age of 2 should not watch videos and television. To read more, visit: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/parenting/05/01/baby.videos.ap.ap/index.html>. Source: CNN.com.
- **Nearly half of all U.S. children under 5 are minorities.** The Washington Post reported that growth of the Hispanic population in the US has contributed to the increase in the percentage of children under age 5 who are racial or ethnic minorities. This demographic shift has broad implications for schools, the workforce, and Social Security. The article also reports that immigrant parents are becoming more concerned with their children's early education, leading to a higher demand for quality pre-kindergarten education. For more information or

to view the original article see: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/09/AR2006050901841.html>. *Source: Washington Post.*