



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**  
**Institute for Youth, Education, and Families**

*Supporting School Readiness: A Critical Economic Investment for Cities*  
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*Speakers:*  
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**Dennis Campa**, director of community initiatives, City of San Antonio, Texas,  
**Nina Sazer O'Donnell**, director, National Strategies/Success By 6, United Way of America.

*HOLSCLAW:* Thank you to everyone across the country that has joined today's audioconference call sponsored by the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. You have joined the "Supporting School Readiness: A Critical Economic Investment for Cities" audioconference and we really appreciate your time. We are going to hear from two cities that are doing some wonderful work to promote school readiness, as well as a national leader on early care and education, currently with the United Way of America. I would like to first give you just a bit of background on why we think that school readiness and municipal roles in promoting school readiness is so critically important.

Here at the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, I, Abby Hughes-Holsclaw, operate our early care and education portfolio as well as our family economic success portfolio and we have seen that the first five years of life are obviously extremely critical to a child's lifelong development and young children's earliest experiences. As many of you know, not only the experiences, but their environment, really seem to set the stage for future development and the success that they may have in school and also in life. As many of you may know, studies show that at least half of the educational achievement gap between poor and middle-income children exists already as children enter kindergarten. Specifically, children from lower-income and minority families are more likely to start school with limited language skills, health problems, social and emotional problems, that obviously could interfere with their ability to learn.

As you know, through a myriad of research, school readiness begins long before children enroll in kindergarten. It begins with efforts to support families, educate parents, and hopefully raise the quality of early care and education in each community. Readiness of children hinges on a lot of different factors, including a child's health and physical development, social

and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and communication skills, cognition and general knowledge overall. We believe that mayors and city councilmembers who are working to boost school readiness efforts at the local level will yield huge dividends by increasing the number of children that enter school ready to learn, thus creating, we hope, more stable families, more early care and education programs that boost early learning, and therefore support for lifelong learning – all of this being much an asset for economic development within a community.

Furthermore, the National League of Cities (NLC) believes that city leaders that focus attention on school readiness can be important catalysts for change in their communities and that local leaders and senior city staff across the country that are working to do this certainly can capitalize on the influence and visibility that they may have with the general public and other policymakers for widespread support for the importance of early learning and school readiness.

So, our main message is that we believe that there is a lot that city leaders can do to really boost school readiness and that all plays into having stronger cities, stronger economies and overall community well-being. I want to personally introduce you to representatives from two cities today and also a national expert. First, I would like to introduce Katie Britton, senior specialist for strategic planning in the City of Boston for Mayor Menino. She coordinates an early childhood strategic planning process known as “Boston’s Birth to Five School Readiness Initiative,” and prior to serving the mayor, she worked at the “Home for the Little Wanderers,” a private, nonprofit, child and family service organization, managing the program to support parent involvement in Boston’s public schools. She holds a Master of Social Work degree with a special focus on human services management from Boston University. Katie, would you like to say hi?

**BRITTON:** Hi, everybody.

**HOLSCLAW:** Thanks. And I would now like to introduce Dennis Campa, director of the Department of Community Initiatives in the City of San Antonio, Texas. He was appointed director in 1998. He has more than 35 years of experience in human development services, including work at the city, county and state levels. He leads several nationally-recognized efforts in school readiness, family economic success, social services and human services reform. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Campa served as neighborhood initiative officer for the city manager’s office in Austin, Texas, coordinating issues of welfare reform, workforce development and community revitalization. He has also served in numerous leadership and management positions, dealing with juvenile and community justice, children and family issues, substance drug abuse, management, audit and evaluation issues. Would you like to say hello?

**CAMPA:** Hello everyone.

**HOLSCLAW:** Thanks. Finally, Nina Sazer O’Donnell is with us today. She is the director of the national strategy “Success by Six” at United Way of America. Prior to that, Nina was vice president of the Families and Work Institute, where she began work on family, friend and neighbor care and led outreach for the “I Am Your Child” campaign, as well as writing many early childhood-building publications. Her experience is wide ranging and it includes childcare,

philanthropy, nonprofit, consulting and education, and she is an adjunct professor, actually, with Wheelock Graduate School of Education. Nina, would like to say hello?

*O'DONNELL:* Hello, everyone.

*HOLSCLAW:* Terrific. Well, I want to move us right into this exciting conversation. We plan to spend the first 30 minutes of the call having a conversation among the three speakers and myself, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions. If a question comes up during our conversation, you can feel free to email that question to Michael Karpman at [Karpman@nlc.org](mailto:Karpman@nlc.org). Otherwise, at about 30 minutes after the hour, our operator will tell us how you can ask questions via phone as well and I will prompt you for that opportunity.

To get us started, I am interested in hearing from both Katie and Dennis about how Boston and San Antonio started to approach their work around promoting school readiness, realizing that some of our conversation is going to take us into moving beyond an existing school readiness initiative to thinking about how do we expand that work to include informal caregivers or as some of you may have heard it referred to as kith and kin care or family, friend and neighbor care. So, Dennis and Katie, tell us a little bit about how Boston and San Antonio have started to do this work and how you identified what the need is in your community. Dennis, do you want to start?

*CAMPA:* Okay, thank you. We started almost nine years ago and it came out of an initiative from the mayor's office. Mayor Peak at the time was promoting better jobs for San Antonio and our theory of change around that was that we needed to raise education and skill levels of our workforce to be able to track those higher, better paying jobs for our community to thrive. We began to have the conversations with employers who were saying that we are not having young people leaving community college or high school ready for the workforce because they lacked the social skills and school superintendents were saying that, "We are not having children entering school that are ready to study, to learn and to progress." So, the mayor challenged us to develop a set of guidelines that began to put school readiness central to the work that we were doing around education and that initiated our work in school readiness.

*HOLSCLAW:* And Katie, what about in Boston?

*BRITTON:* Well, Boston is similar to San Antonio in that this also started out of the mayor's office, but was also really grounded to the community, too. Our mayor, Mayor Menino, set a priority of closing the achievement gap and the people working on that issue started setting goals for what they wanted every student to achieve and one of those goals was that everyone would start kindergarten ready, and on an equal playing field, so when that was set as a goal, everyone quickly realized that they really needed to focus on the birth to five years to make sure that that could happen. So, hence, the launch of our whole school readiness initiative here.

*HOLSCLAW:* And that really leads me into my next set of questions. Tell us a little bit about what you are doing. What specifically are you doing to improve outcomes for when children enter your public schools in San Antonio and Boston to really make a difference, so that they are ready to learn? Katie, do you want to kick this part of the conversation off?

**BRITTON:** Sure. I think in Boston we started out really fortunate because we already have a lot of programs in place to make sure that this happens. We have a program called “Countdown to Kindergarten” that helps parents and children prepare over the first years, or before they enter kindergarten about what to expect and what schools look like, but beyond that, our whole “Birth to Five School Readiness Initiative” is really focused on developing a long-term strategic plan for what everyone in the city can do to impact school readiness in the first few years of life. We have a 60-member planning group that is working on developing this long term plan and outside of that, we also have a couple of other things going on in this initiative. Some things are on assessment, to figure out where we are as a community in terms of school readiness and other things to promote parents roles as a child’s first teacher, to promote parents talking more to their young kids to bridge the vocabulary gap. So, a lot of different work is going on right now.

**HOLSCLAW:** And I want to pick up on one piece that you mentioned there, assessment. Tell us a little bit about how you evaluated where Boston is and any specific actions that you have identified that the city has taken or may take, based upon that assessment.

**BRITTON:** Sure. I think what we started out doing with this initiative is really starting to figure out, where are the kids and families in our city? What are the characteristics of those kids and families and what does that tell us about where we need to go? So we have done a lot of demographic mapping. We have also started to look at where our services are and what families are using and accessing. Beyond that, as part of this initiative though, we are starting a pilot assessment when kids enter kindergarten at age five and our kindergarten actually begins at age three, not for every child, but there are some slots for three-year-olds and some slots for four-year-olds. Every child that is five is guaranteed a kindergarten slot, so starting in the next school year, we will be piloting an assessment that focuses on sort of the major domains of school readiness and kids to figure out where are we with the city. It is not something that we have measured previously.

**HOLSCLAW:** No. That is really helpful. Dennis, your work has been going on a while as well, and I know in San Antonio you have expanded that work given new information that you all obtained about where kids actually are. So, talk a little bit about what are the specific things that San Antonio is doing.

**CAMPA:** Eight years ago, we started off, again, as part of the mayor’s initiative and we developed a set of school readiness guidelines that focused on helping parents develop three skills within their children; problem solving skills, communication skills and language skills and what we wanted to do was find ways that propped up the parent’s role in their child’s development. We did that by focusing on neighborhoods, the early childhood centers that fed the elementary school, and the relationship between early childhood teachers and kindergarten teachers and I think we had some very good success the first five to six years.

But the last two years our focus has begun to shift significantly towards the family, friends and neighbor providers because we realize that we had about 45,000 children, zero to five, in family, friend and neighbor care and the vast majority being in unlicensed and unregistered situations. So, we said that we really need to find ways to connect these people, the

caregivers, to the best knowledge and training that is available to promote child development as well as connecting the children to mainstream services and their parents. So, our work, while we are still promoting quality early care and education, we are still promoting a neighborhood-based approach around early childhood centers and elementary schools, so the majority of our work and our investment now has gone towards finding family, friend, and neighbor caregivers, bringing them in and connecting them to mainstream resources and promoting early childhood development through them.

*HOLSCLAW:* This leads me to turning the conversation over to Nina Sazer-O'Donnell, from the United Way of America, because as many of our callers probably realize, United Way for many years has been invested in work to promote early learning through "Success by Six" and "Born Learning." And so Nina, talk to us about the United Way's role in promoting school readiness and where you are seeing some of the major activity and perhaps how United Way is playing a part in this assessment piece both in Boston and San Antonio.

*O'DONNELL:* Good question, Abby. The United Way as you mentioned, has traditionally, for about 17 years, been working on early childhood issues, through the "Success by Six" initiative. Those of you who partner with United Way probably already know this. United Way is in what we are calling a transformation, which is sort of a reinvention of itself from being seen as traditionally the fundraising organization that raises funds and gives them out to a set of organizations to a mission where our goal is to create community change to improve lives. And so fundraising becomes one strategy for doing that, and all local United Ways are trying to assess what is causing measurable community impact. There are 360 "Success by Six" programs around the country in our network of 1,300 plus local United Ways. We have found out that more than 80 percent are doing some sort of early childhood initiative oftentimes as in the role of neutral convener, as a community partner, as a fundraiser and a policy advocate. So, we are working to grow capacity of all the United Ways to create change.

In addition, as Abby mentioned, we have a national Ad Council campaign, which is a partnership with the Families and Work Institute and set a policy that is really aimed at helping parents, and family, friend and neighbor caregivers understand how young children learn and how they can help them learn and develop a lifelong love of learning and, of course, be successful in school and life. We were very intentional about including family, friend, and neighbor care providers as one of the target audiences for this forward-moving campaign and if anybody does miss all the wonderful resources that are available, you can go to [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org), where you can see more than 500 different tools and experiences that you can use.

But we were concerned because throughout the country, the majority of our nation's youngest and poorest kids are typically with family, friend and neighbor caregivers, for a wide variety of reasons, including just parental choice. Many of them prefer that babies be with family and then when they get to be three or four, they feel more comfortable about them going to a group program. For some families, it is economics. For some families, it is because they want to preserve their family culture or values. For other employees, it is because they work nontraditional hours when traditional care is not available. We saw that there is a huge focus on preschool in the country, which is wonderful, but we also know that a tremendous

amount of great architecture is developed in the early years and if we are not paying attention to what happens to the babies, we are not doing our job in helping them get ready for school.

*HOLSCLAW:* You know, that is helpful, Nina. NLC certainly considers that United Ways across the country are strong, strategic partners for this work as well as a lot of other work, in that in a lot of communities across the country, there are cities and United Ways and there might not be other infrastructures available to help support such movement.

I am interested in both San Antonio and Boston and perhaps, Dennis, let's hear from you first. Who are you partnering with that is allowing you - and we will focus maybe specifically on those informal caregivers because that may be a newer part of this conversation for the callers on the line today - but talk about who you are partnering with, and give the callers a bit more information about some of the very specific action steps that you have taken in San Antonio, to connect those informal caregivers to resources.

*CAMPA:* Okay. We have eight organizations that are part of our initiative and that includes Avancia, which is the parent education program; our public television station, one of our school districts, the YWCA, the public library system and two early childhood organizations in the University of Texas in San Antonio. Each of them has a specific role to serve a certain part of city council district and to do a piece of work.

Let me give some examples. The library and our public television station have the responsibility to provide resources and workshops for the whole community and support the other agencies in the family, friends and neighbors care. So, at the library, at our 22 library branches, we have family, friend and neighbor workshops and as they come in and complete the five series that we have there, they are able to leave with books and a library card, which is what we really want. We have all of them doing a minimum of five courses: Early Brain Development, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Health and Nutrition and Safety. So, that is our baseline.

In addition to that, each of the providers offers something special, but it is geared toward the neighborhood and it is geared toward the community, so if it is primarily monolingual Spanish, it is looking at connecting them to things in Spanish and we have a TV series that national public television offers. It is "Los Ninos en Su Casa," "The Children in Your Home." This is a very good program focused on specifically providing supports and opportunities to family, friends and neighbors.

So, each one of them is doing something specific. For example, Avance does play and learn groups. Positive Beginnings is one of our other organizations and they have a lot of very elder monolingual Mexican natives, primarily grandparents and they meet with them in parks and have cook outs with them as a way of engaging them and teaching them. But the take-aways we want them to do are those five courses, to have a library card and to begin to look at connecting themselves to mainstream resources, the library being a primary one and our health clinics being second and the third is for them to begin to talk to the parents about the child's next stage in development in going to kindergarten and getting ready for school.

*HOLSCLAW:* That is helpful. That leads me into a question, actually to Nina, to tell us a little bit more about something that Dennis just mentioned and that is play and learn groups. I know that this is a model that is in several communities and, specifically, if you would like to talk a

few months and go a little deeper on what is a play and learn group and how it preps? Using Seattle as a model or another United Way that you would like to highlight, and then I am going to move to Boston and ask Katie to go a little more specific on something that Boston is doing as a part of their school readiness initiative.

*O'DONNELL:* Okay. The model for play and learn groups actually was promoted in Hawaii. It developed assistance throughout the state and their five counties and cities who have sponsored these groups. It is actually just popcorning all across the country and the basic notion is that on a regular basis, we had a trained facilitator in a place where caregivers naturally go, where we would like to set up tape players and play or work. Oftentimes, it is set up where people can walk to, who might not have cars to get there. There is structure tied with activities that train facilitators how to encourage early learning. Usually in most play and learn groups, however, there is variation. Caregivers can borrow learning materials, books and activity kits and take them home and bring them back. Because of the travel increase in the model, in Hawaii, they have begun to call them family/child interaction programs to give them a more serious name, but basically it is a way for caregivers to connect with good information, with good modeling, with each other because they are connected to social networks and as Dennis mentioned, also to connect them with things like child health insurance, head start or other resources that might help their family.

*HOLSCLAW:* Thanks, Nina. And Katie tell us a little bit more about Boston's specific actions that have been taken since the school readiness initiative has been launched and maybe expand what you are saying to include how elected officials, in particular, have played a critical role in the work that has happened there in Boston.

*BRITTON:* Sure. I think right now in Boston, we are still sort of in the planning stages so we are very fortunate to have a mayor who is highly supportive of this and has really used his convener role to really pull this together, with people from all different sectors of this city. We have a 60 member planning team that has corporate leaders, foundation leaders, public school system representation, you know, all the way down to early care and education providers and family support and education providers. You name it. They are there. So, he has been a great champion of this. What else, let's see. Sorry. I was sort of focusing in on the play to learn groups, which is something else that Boston has been working on here. We are doing a similar model, but are actually having them in elementary schools so that families can go in and see the school with their young child and get comfortable with the school environment.

*HOLSCLAW:* And how has that been received, Katie?

*BRITTON:* It has been really well received and it is a program that we are hoping to expand over the next couple of years. It is also really highly supported by our interim superintendent of the school system. There are a couple of different sites operating now, you know, there are multiple groups each week, who have high attendance and waiting lists in most of the different groups.

*HOLSCLAW:* And you know, this is a question that we always get, so I might as well put it on the table. How are you paying for any of the work that you are doing? I am interested in hearing both from Dennis and Katie specifically about how have you paid for your school readiness initiatives in the past and then obviously this expansion of what you are doing to reach informal care advisors, Dennis, and Katie, for you, as the group continues to plan and broaden the city's existing commitment to early learning, how will you pay for some of the components that this group is coming up with? Dennis?

*CAMPA:* Again, when we started eight years ago, the city has traditionally put up about \$1.2 million to buy childcare and that was used as a match for the federal Child Care Block Grant. The state does not put up all the money to draw down the federal dollars so they turn to the local community. So, you save several hundred children a childcare slot, we thought that that money could be better used and we were managing our childcare slots effectively, so we reallocated that money to school readiness eight years ago and that has become our stable source of funding.

So, we use it for our school readiness and it is still able to attract federal matching dollars for child care purposes and it also allows us to do something that we have wanted to do, but have not been able to do and that has been to do outreach for multi-benefit enrollment. When we think about the 1,400-1,500 family, friends and neighbor providers that we know about, that we have their names and addresses, that is 1,500 people that we can connect to food stamps, children health insurance and Medicaid, immunizations, the volunteer tax assistance program and so it is a very quick way to touch those people, and to touch the children that they are serving as well as the parents that are receiving that kind of care and to us, that is the intermediate short term result that we want because we are not going to know for a few years, how well the children have done until they enter kindergarten. So, we are going to do everything to help prepare them, but our theory around this is that the more that we can improve their quality of life for their family, friends and neighbor providers and their parents, they will do better when they get ready to go to school.

*HOLSCLAW:* Okay. And Katie, what about funding for Boston?

*BRITTON:* Sure. Here in Boston, our initiative that we are working under right now is funded through a grant from a large private family foundation in Boston and it is matched with in-kind investments from the city and the United Way, so we have about a million dollars to play with right now. Part of our planning process is really to identify the ways that we are spending our current investments and current funding to be the most beneficial for the largest number. So this is something that our planning team is looking at. Are there better ways to maximize what we have now? But we are also looking for new funders. We have already started convening a group of corporate foundation and government leaders, which will continue to convene on a regular basis throughout this planning process to bring them along with what we are doing so that a year from now, when we have a plan all in place, they are hopefully ready with a checkbook.

*HOLSCLAW:* Right. That would be nice. Nina, I want to turn back to you and get your perspective on two questions. One is a bit double-sided. Talk to me or to this group a little bit

about what you have seen in your work with United Way of America and previously with Families and Work Institute, what the roles of city leaders can be in this work and why it is so critical and important, as well as the role of United Way of America, which you mentioned a little bit before and then I want to have you talk a little bit too about your perspective on how people across the country in these United Ways are raising funding streams to support school readiness, and what creative ideas you might have for our callers on the line.

*O'DONNELL:* Let me start with the funding question first before going on. One of the things that is very interesting about this whole arena is that it is relatively new and if you think about family, friends and neighbor care, we did several projects and have studied it in several states and communities and really see it as being on the family support end of the continuum, more than on the formal childcare end of the continuum. I think that we have not even begun to tap both the expertise and the resources of the multiple systems that touch the lives of care givers who tend to be grandparents. Two-thirds of the family, friend and neighbor providers nationally are grandparents.

So, if you think about that and if you think about the fact that they prefer to get training, information, and support in social settings like faith communities, it opens the door to thinking about other systems and other system expertise and resources in ways that we have not even begun to explore. I think from a systemic development point of view, one of the next really important steps is going to be bringing stake holders to the table from family support, from senior services, from day communities and libraries and museums. Also I have, very much, have come to think that in some ways this is a public health issue, that anyone that cares for kids needs to know something about child development, so public health and healthcare providers to connect with kids and families.

So, I think that while traditionally the work has thus far been funded by mostly local foundations and United Ways, I think that cities have a unique opportunity because of their parks departments. There are so many city services and departments that could be brought to the table to brainstorm on how to do this work. Nationally, there has only been one foundation that has stepped out and funded even the development of this and we are still waiting for others to get on board, but I have a feeling that if we begin to look at this arena through these multiple lenses that we will begin to generate more and more support.

*HOLSCLAW:* Well talking about really oddly enough what you just said, thinking about giving the multiple systems that could be engaged to support this work at the local level, what do you see municipal roles being is perhaps my first question and then also partners, such as United Way of America?

*O'DONNELL:* Right. I mean I think that municipal workers probably are only limited by the creativity and will of the people as the people in city government, elected officials or superintendents. Certainly, parks can be a place where caregivers can gather and use resources. A lot of play and learn groups happen in parks.

Transportation is often an issue, so if there are programs in a community where, for example, I think this is happened in Boston, Katie, you can correct me, but I think my friend at the Boston Children's Museum, found out that a kindergarten a few years ago arranged to be

able to give city bus passes to family, friend and neighbor providers so that they and their children could come to the children's museum.

Housing is a huge potential area because not only does public housing facilities often have community rooms or programming for residents where a lot of kids and a lot of caregivers reside there. So, I think the opportunities are limitless. If people have the will and the desire to partner, United Way and cities, I think have a wonderful set of opportunities to partner together to play a joint role, convening at least as partners and figuring out how to solve this issue together.

*HOLSCLAW:* I think that is something that we underscore here at the Institute for Youth, Education and Families and that is the power to convene and to map existing services and resources and provide a connection to all of that. I want to give Kiera, our conference call operator, a chance to give everyone the opportunity to understand how you can ask a question. You can e-mail your questions to [Karpman@nlc.org](mailto:Karpman@nlc.org) or Kiera, if you will come on the line and tell us how to ask a question via phone.

*OPERATOR:* If you would like to ask a question, please press \*1 on your telephone keypad.

*HOLSCLAW:* Terrific. Kiera, do we have any questions already in line?

*OPERATOR:* There are no questions in the queue.

*HOLSCLAW:* So, if you are interested in asking a question, we definitely want to hear from you. We understand that this is just a snapshot of what two communities are doing and we could spend hours talking about all of the different strategies and one thing that we love at the National League of Cities is that every community is so unique. So, we are hoping that you are picking up some new ideas and are able to tweak and customize these to your own communities. Dennis, I want to circle back around to you for a moment, and ask you, in San Antonio, how have your elected officials been engaged and supportive of this work?

*CAMPA:* They have been very supportive. We have probably the most regressive term limits in the country; two two-year terms and then you are out for life, so it is difficult for them to even get a street built in their first two-year term, but what our family, friends, and neighbors, and school readiness work has been able to do is connect the, immediately it gives them a deliverable and it gives them the opportunity for a lot of exposure in their neighborhood, because we have fairly large community events that we do with at least one or two in every council district annually that draws thousands of parents and teachers and it becomes a forum for the council member to talk about their commitment to education and to talk about what they are doing to help parents how to support and opportunities to raise their children to get them to succeed. But also, in a very real way, it connects them to the essence of public service and you know, why they ran for office and what they hope to achieve. In insuring that children are connected to resources and support, that families have jobs and healthcare, and this is a way for them to connect in a very positive way. It stresses the asset development of families and children and does not look at working with families and children from the deficit model.

*HOLSCLAW:* Okay. Kiera, do we have any questions in the queue?

*OPERATOR:* There is a question from Tracey Hollingworth.

*HOLLINGWORTH:* Okay, I actually just e-mailed my questions as well. Sorry about that.

*HOLSCLAW:* That's okay. Go ahead and ask.

*HOLLINGWORTH:* My first question would be how do you access the information? I really like what Boston and San Antonio are saying. I am in Long Beach and we are moving along those similar lines. I would love to read and share with my committee about the work that you are doing and how we can replicate it here. So I am wondering where can we find that information?

*HOLSCLAW:* Well, maybe I should start. Here at the National League of Cities, we will have a transcript of this call, so you can certainly do that and pass that out and send that to folks, even maybe prior to committee meetings because it may be a little long for them to read, but Dennis and Katie, I would like to have you tell Tracey what you have in writing that you may want to pass to us that we would be happy to pass onto the participants that are on our call today, and I also want to give Nina a chance to talk about the tools and resources that might be helpful to Long Beach.

*CAMPA:* I can offer mine very quickly. If you go to our Web site at [www.sanantonio.gov/comminit](http://www.sanantonio.gov/comminit), everything that I have shared with you is on our Web site. In addition to that, our public television station has a very robust site that has even more material and they are at [www.klrn.org](http://www.klrn.org).

*BRITTON:* Well, here in Boston, I wish we were at that stage. I would be happy to share any of our planning documents. We are working on getting a Web site up to tell more people about what we are doing here, although we are relatively new, so we have not had a chance to do it yet, but I would be happy to share that with you.

*HOLSCLAW:* Katie, if you will send that to us, we would be happy to send them out and maybe if you pass along a list of who is on your committee as far as organizational representation, that might be helpful for people to see who are the stake holders that you are pulling to the table, recognizing that that is probably desirous. Nina, I know that you probably have a long list of additions to add to this list of resources that could be helpful to Long Beach.

*O'DONNELL:* Well, I will just mention a couple. One was that there are actually two reports on line on the Family and Work Institute Web site where I used to work. They are both called "Sparkling Connections." There are two reports done about four years apart. One actually has a very long list of model programs around the country including play and learn groups and the second one reports on eight sites around the country, four of which were United Ways and state and community groups that have been focusing on family, friend and neighbor care. So, it is best to go to the Families and Work Institute at [www.familiesandwork.org](http://www.familiesandwork.org) and look for the Sparkling Connections report, which is a free downloadable.

The only thing that I wanted to mention in addition to the public television show that the folks in San Antonio have been airing is that there is another wonderful relatively new program that was done in Mobile, and is being done by KCET in Los Angeles, the public television station there, and it is called “A Place of Our Own.” It is produced both in English and Spanish and it is, as of April, being made available to public television stations nationally. It is a talk show for anyone who is caring for kids at home and it is just wonderful. So, that is just a little bit of a start and in both of the sparking connection reports, there are resource lists and examples.

*HOLSCLAW:* Well, thanks. That is very helpful. I now have a question from Virginia Beach and this is very, I think, pertinent to our conversation and we danced around it a little bit, but let’s go a little bit deeper for the folks on the line to maybe understand. How have you in Boston and in San Antonio, and then Nina what advice you have to offer up on what is happening otherwise across the country. How have you identified who are the family, friends and neighbors that are providing care for young children? How have you identified them and how are you connecting with them?

*BRITTON:* I will let Dennis start because that is a question that we have in Boston and we have a large informal care provider network up here, well, it is not even a network and it is a community that we need to do more to reach out to, so I would love to hear from Dennis.

*CAMPA:* Well, the first thing we did is that we took the low hanging fruit and through the childcare block grant, we have 900 relative providers that are caring for about 1,200 children. So, we know who they are because we pay them every month. So, that was our first group that we reached out to. From that, we asked them to bring in friends and they did that. Then we began to connect through the mediating institutions in the neighborhood; the libraries, the community centers, the congregations, the WIC (women, infant, and children) offices, every place that we could find kids and families and grandparents, we did that.

The other part that we have an advantage in is the human services department. We have senior services, so on a daily basis, we serve 4,000 noon meals to seniors in 78 community locations, mostly congregations. So that also became a venue for us to reach out to grandparents to talk about families, friends and neighbors. So, through that, we were able to touch thousands of people right away, as well as the partners that we have selected, like the public television stations, the libraries, the school districts and our other partners.

*HOLSCLAW:* And Nina, what other advice would you have based upon the work that you have been doing?

*O’DONNELL:* Well, I think, you know the kind of approach that they are using in San Antonio is exactly the right approach. The only other thing that I can say is that when we did our survey in trying to find caregivers even to study, to talk to and to interview, we found them through the parents. So, if you talk to parents and you are able to get parents’ trust, they might connect you to their caregivers that what our Sparking Connections sites found around the country was exactly what Dennis just said that you need to go to the organizations that caregivers connect with and build a trusting relationship. It is definitely relationship-based work and once there are

resources or services or things going on that caregivers trust and feel comfortable connecting with and use, that is how they are found. Again, I will repeat this. It is kind of weird, but it is where they pay, pray, play and work.

*HOLSCLAW:* Great. That is catchy. Kiera, do we have another question?

*OPERATOR:* There is a question from Jennifer Naman.

*HOLSCLAW:* Jennifer, you are on the line.

*NAMAN:* Hi. I am calling from the United Way of New York City. I actually have a question for Boston. I am wondering if you identified an assessment tool that you will be using for the kindergarten children and then, if so or even if not, how do you intend to sort of inform the work of the early childhood community based on what this assessment tells you?

*BRITTON:* Sure. Our kindergarten children, I think we have identified an assessment field. We are planning on using the work sampling assessment because it matches well with the curriculum that we use in sort of the younger elementary years and also coordinates well with later assessments that we do. In addition, to looking at and piloting this assessment for kindergarten children, we also have another group working on figuring out what other assessments can we use in early care and education environments and those two groups are going to be working together to figure out what are the links between these two so that we can make sure that we are not starting kids off in kindergarten with an assessment that does not match at all with what has been the focus on the early care and education setting.

*HOLSCLAW:* Kiera, are there any more questions?

*OPERATOR:* The next question is from Elena Sacarow.

*HOLSCLAW:* Elena, you are on the line.

*SANFORD:* Actually, there are two of us listening in and this is from Claire Sanford. Also, both of us are here from United Way of Massachusetts Bay in Boston and my question is for Dennis, and it piggy backs on the previous question, you have had your initiative operating in San Antonio for eight years and you mentioned earlier that your hope was that if you connect family, friends and neighbor care providers especially to food stamps and healthy insurance and other things like that, that support the families and the care givers, that kids will be better off and I was wondering if there was a plan in place to use some sort of assessment once the children that you have been serving through this initiative do end up in the school system to see what kind of difference is being made?

*CAMPA:* Yes. What we have been doing through the University of Texas, on our first six years of work are children and parents and early childhood teachers, have they made progress and that is something that I think that we have on our Web site and if not, if you send me an e-

mail, I will be happy to share the research that they have conducted. My email is [dennis.campa@sanantonio.gov](mailto:dennis.campa@sanantonio.gov).

What we plan to do for the new work that we have embarked on over the last 18 to 24 months is to see how - there are like three key indicators for each group, the family, friends and neighbor providers, the child and the parent. So, are they better off? Has the knowledge and skill level of the family, friend and caregiver provider improved and are they networking with other family, friends and neighbor providers? This is four. I thought it was only three. Are they connected to other neighborhood institutions? And for the child, we are looking at do they have the problem solving skills, the language skills and the communication skills and there are a number of assessments that the University of Texas is doing on a survey basis and the schools have agreed to work with us both on the kindergarten assessment, as well as the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level.

*HOLSCLAW:* Dennis, is the city funding that?

*CAMPA:* Yes, we are funding the study with the University. The leverage that we have with the school district is that we also fund the after school program in the district and part of our contract with them requires them to participate in any research that we want to do for school readiness as well as after school. Then the third group is the parents and their result areas are very similar to the caregivers. Are they better off financially? Have their education skill level improved? Are they doing more family strengthening activities and there is a host of those that means that they read to their child more often, less TV time, using the library and public benefits. So, those are the things that we hope to demonstrate within the next 6-12 months that we have begun to make some improvement on.

*HOLSCLAW:* Kiera, do we have any more questions?

*OPERATOR:* Our next question is from Richard Patton.

*HOLSCLAW:* Richard, you are on the line. What city are you from?

*CARLSON:* This is actually Patty Carlson from St. Louis. There are about 20 of us here. I am the director of youth services in the St. Louis public library, so this is self-interest. I want to know who is presenting in San Antonio, your family, friends and neighbors session? Is that the librarians, the library paraprofessionals, volunteers, the partner agencies? Is it the partnership or is this that the library is hosting, providing space and other people are doing the program and then, really down to the nitty gritty, do you get repeat attendance? You have five sessions. Do the same families come back? One, two, three, four, five, and then graduate and, if so, how do you get that repeat attendance?

*CAMPA:* Okay. It is a little bit of everything that you suggested. All the partnerships present the information. So, the San Antonio public library, we have a funding agreement to them, so we provide them, you know, it is a sister city department, but we fund other city departments to do work for us, so we are funding them to do this work in their libraries, so it is

library staff that have this as part of their mission and primarily the child and families of library folks that are doing it.

We have progressive incentives, so everybody gets something the first time they come, maybe one book, but they get a very nice kit when they complete the five sessions and I think the more we make it interesting, and the sessions are normally an hour to an hour and a half, so it is not a very long time and obviously, we want them to bring the child, but they leave with something and each time it is something more progressive and the benefit is that they build a relationship and they have been able to network with other people that are family, friends and neighbors. They form new relationships so that they can help out each other and now they are connected to use the library, the public television station, the neighborhood provider or some other benefit. So, I think we have a fairly good completion rate. I think the numbers hover around 75 percent, which with this group I think is you know is very, very good and so, let me stop there.

*HOLSCLAW:* That is very helpful Dennis and it sounds like, on the library stuff - I have one follow up question to that. Did you put them through any additional training or provide any additional elevated set of resources for them to carry out a mission, which is probably core to what they are interested in anyway, but may be a little bit different?

*CAMPA:* We want to build the capacity, so our only requirement was that people submit a set of results that we are willing to tie into and everybody would also offer these five courses: the early brain development, social and emotional development, language and literacy, health and nutrition and safety. Then, they can add enhancements unique to their organization. So, the library is connecting them to all the library resources and people leaving with a library card, but the libraries I think have distributed more than 2,700 books and tote bags as part of this effort, so it strengthens the work of the library, particularly the branch libraries that are in low volume neighborhoods. Now, we are paying them to do the work also.

*HOLSCLAW:* Right.

*O'DONNELL:* One quick resource, if you do not know about family-placed libraries that is another model for serving caregivers. The other is to Google "family-placed libraries." You will see a lot about it. The mother ship is in middle country New York. They are actually a family center in a library and are working with family, friend and neighbor care providers and are training libraries how to become a family placed library around the country, so that is another great resource.

*HOLSCLAW:* Nina, you said that model was in New York?

*O'DONNELL:* It started in New York. It is all over the country. We did a conference call on it a few months ago, so United Way has a knowledge café. If people are interested, I can get them the transcript of that conference call.

*HOLSCLAW:* That you be great if you could email that to us so we could email it out. So, that is great. Recognizing our time, I want to ask each of our speakers to offer the best advice that

they have on promoting school readiness, whether it be a comprehensive strategy or expanding that comprehensive strategy to include informal care givers. Katie, starting with you, what last piece of advice would you leave with folks on either a lesson learned that Boston has had, thus far, in the planning process or looking forward or on your past efforts?

*BRITTON:* Well, I think the key piece of this for us has really been getting broad engagement from every part of our community. It has helped us get the buy-in that we need to make sure that everybody is there, kind of at the table for this plan and I think that after our plan is finished, it will help us have the broad-based support that we need to really have an impact with young kids.

*HOLSCLAW:* And Dennis, what about for San Antonio? Best advice.

*CAMPA:* My advice to everyone is that school readiness is one reason to do it, but the larger reason to do it is around family well-being. So, the more you can link this to if families do better, you raise the educational and skill level of our community and our children will do better. We have seized school readiness as a strategy to accomplish that.

*HOLSCLAW:* And Nina, final thoughts?

*O'DONNELL:* Well, ditto to what Katie and Dennis said and I want to leave people with a provocative thought which is not only are the majority of family, friends and neighbors caregivers grandparents, but grandparents as a potential set of people in the community, even those who are not caregivers, I think are an untapped resource and I think that we ought to look at grandparents as community volunteers, as advocates, as problem solvers and develop this whole new constituency as a resource.

*HOLSCLAW:* Wonderful. Well, I want to thank every one for being with us today. If you thought today's conversation was particularly helpful, you are in for another treat, and that is that we are inviting you to join us, the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to go see San Antonio in person. You have heard a lot from Dennis today. There is a lot of work going on in the city of San Antonio, beyond early care and education work and we are convening our 2007 Summit on Your City's Families. It is the bi-annual conference that the institute hosts in San Antonio, Texas and the topic will include information that is in our range of portfolio areas, so not just early childhood, but also family economic success, youth development, youth engagement, K-12 education, after school alternative schools, etc. So, if you are interested in that, I would very much invite you to visit [www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef). This Summit is taking place from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup>, in San Antonio and registration is up on our Web site. This conference is specifically about family, youth and children and we invite you to come and bring stake holders from your community. So, bring along your United Way counterpart, your elected officials, your faith based community representatives and others and do plan to join us.

I would also ask you to consider joining our early care and education network. Again, you can visit [www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef) to find out more information on the early care and education network, where you would receive bi-monthly newsletters around resources that are coming out related to early care and education as well as the city strategy spotlight and see examples of some of the innovative work taking place in communities across the country.

Again, thank you for your time in joining us today. We look forward, here at the Institute, to helping you in any way that we can and we hope that you will also plan to join our next audioconference call entitled, “Making Youth a High Priority: City-School Youth Master Planning Initiative,” which is scheduled for May 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m., Eastern Time. Thank you and I hope that you all have a great rest of the day.