

The Parent-Child Home Program

N E W S L E T T E R

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Soaring to Success Through Books and Play...

Successful in Seattle: A Business Partnership Creates Opportunities

Seattle, Washington is a city known for its trendsetting and its growing diversity. Like communities across the country, Seattle and the state of Washington are challenged by increasing numbers of children who arrive in school unprepared to be successful students. The state estimates that 75% of children from its lowest income families are not ready for school by the time they reach kindergarten. Committed to reversing this trend, a group of community-focused funders (BPEL) and the city government have joined forces with The Parent-Child Home Program to set a new trend in Seattle.

The Business Partnership for Early Learning (BPEL) is a coalition of King County business leaders committed to reducing, and eventually eliminating, the school-preparedness gap for those Seattle children who are most likely to be left behind in school. BPEL is conducting a five-year demonstration of The Parent-Child Home Program to help guide future early learning strategies (See inset).

The first site to serve Seattle families opened in 2004, sponsored by the Atlantic Street/Rainier Beach Center in conjunction with the New School Foundation and currently funded by BPEL. In 2005, three more sites began serving families in Seattle, two of which are located in Rainer Vista and New Holly and are sponsored by Neighborhood House and also funded by BPEL. The third is sponsored by Southwest Youth and Family Services and is funded by Seattle's Families and Education Levy.

Each Seattle site serves African-American, Latino American, and many immigrant families from East Africa and Southeast Asia, 64% of whom speak a language other than English at home. Some of these languages are Spanish, Amharic, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Oromo, Tigrynea,

Blain, Cham, Khemer, and Somali. 72.7% of the families served earn less than \$20,000 per year and half of those earn less than \$10,000. *(continued on page 5)*

Positive Outcomes in Seattle

The Business Partnership for Early Learning (BPEL) is conducting a five-year demonstration of The Parent-Child Home Program in Seattle. Data on the families who have completed the first year of the Program shows significant changes in children's skills and in parent behaviors that supports school readiness and academic success.

After just one year in The Parent-Child Home Program, children describe pictures in a book with words or sentences 54.4% more often.

Parents converse with their children 57% more often, and smile or show approval to encourage positive behavior in their children 67.4% more frequently than they did before the Program.

Previous studies show that the rate of increase in positive behavior intensifies over the second Program year, as new practices become habits for participants. BPEL and The Parent-Child Home Program are looking forward to more remarkable outcomes for Seattle families.

SINCE 1965

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Samsidah Aly (right), a home visitor from Neighborhood House in Seattle, WA, visits with the Coshem family. Photo by: Brenna Casey.

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Letter from Executive Director and Board President

As children return to school, we are reminded of the importance of ensuring that all children enter school ready to learn. The Parent-Child Home Program is committed to helping low-income

families prepare their children to enter school ready to be successful students. We are delighted to be expanding into a new state, Minnesota, and the District of Columbia this fall. We are also pleased that so many existing sites are expanding into additional communities. In Massachusetts, a funding increase from the legislature, to \$3 million, will enable existing sites to serve more families and support the opening of new sites around the state.

We are also growing our research capacity. A grant from the William Penn Foundation is supporting a control group study of the school readiness of Parent-Child Home Program participants in Philadelphia. The data collected will enable us to follow both groups as they move through school toward high school graduation.

In order to increase the funding available for proven home visiting models like The Parent-Child Home Program, we are working with a national coalition of home visiting and other early childhood organizations to pass the Education Begins at Home Act. In September, the House Education Reform Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill. After the hearing, Rep. Davis (D-IL), who introduced the bill, observed, "This hearing recognized the importance of home visiting as part of the continuum of childhood education that is needed to ensure that our children are prepared for and succeed in school. The strong bipartisan support shown for home visiting and for the Education Begins at Home Act makes me optimistic that this bill will gain momentum in the next Congress. I commend the coalition of home visiting organizations — including Healthy Families America, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, The Parent-Child Home Program, Parents as Teachers, and Nurse-Family Partnership — that have invested their time and energy to focus congressional attention on the significance of home visiting." As we enter this new school year, we applaud the increased awareness of the value of home visiting and are excited about new opportunities to bridge the preparation gap and ensure that school readiness services are available to all families who need them.

Sarah E. Walzer
Executive Director

Brenda Di Leo
President, Board of Directors

Board Leadership Changes

We want to express our gratitude to Charlie Butts who completed his 4-year term as Board President in June 2006. Charlie will continue serving on the board, as he has for 8 years, focusing on expanding the Program to reach more families in need while maintaining high quality services. The board and staff of The Parent-Child Home Program are indebted to him for his commitment to the Program. As a former State Senator, he brought his legislative experience to bear as he carried the message across the country that this is a Program that works and should be expanded.

We are delighted to welcome Brenda Di Leo, a Partner at Deloitte & Touche LLP, as the new President of the Board. Brenda has been both vice-president and treasurer of the Board. She has a successful career providing financial and business advisory services to a wide-range of financial institutions, including many Fortune 500 corporations. Brenda brings both a commitment to our mission and her business and financial management skills to the challenge of leading the Board as we work to double the number of families served.

A Seattle Mom Starts a Tradition of Learning

When Alaina Brown of Seattle, Washington began participating in The Parent-Child Home Program with her 2-year-old twin sons, Nee'e and Dyami, the boys only spoke a few words and threw violent tantrums whenever they were frustrated. The Browns joined the Program through Southwest Youth & Family Services, a community-based organization that provides critical social services to families throughout the southwest area of Seattle. The single mom and energetic twins of Native American heritage had gone through some tough times and Alaina was eager to provide her boys with a stable home life and as much preparation for success as she was able. She tried a few home-based programs before starting The Parent-Child Home Program but the boys did not respond well because they were either very strict or did not focus on her and her boys working together.

Alaina appreciated The Parent-Child Home Program's gentle approach and the 2-year-olds took immediately to the special play time with their mom the model facilitates. Their home visitor, Nancy Scheimann, is proud to

relate that the family completed all 46 visits and the few times they had to reschedule were due to illness or doctors' appointments.

Nee'e and Dyami turned three this summer and have recently begun their second year of the Program. After just one year of the Program, the boys are now speaking in short sentences and have a significantly broadened vocabulary. They can both sit quietly and read along with a book and they remain engaged with mom and their home visitor for long stretches of time. Aliana says, "They play together much more and watch less television." She also explained that Nancy really taught her how to talk to her sons. "I learned to ask them questions about what they were looking at or doing and I ask them to 'use their words' when they want something," she says.

Perhaps the best part of their experience in The Parent-Child Home Program so far has been how much the boys enjoy all of the books and toys Nancy brings into their home. Nee'e, who underwent open heart surgery at just 10-months-old, is particularly taken with the puzzles. "He would



2-year-old twins, Nee'e and Dyami Brown, eagerly read their favorite books with mom, Alaina, and home visitor, Nancy Scheimann (right).

just pull them out and do them over and over," Nancy noted. Dyami's favorite book is *Brown Bear Brown Bear*.

The boys' aunt (whom they and Alaina live with), Nancy, and Alaina are all overwhelmed by the progress the two boys have made just one year into the Program and are excited to see what is ahead for them. Alaina is

committed to making sure her sons never miss an opportunity to learn and sends their Parent-Child Home Program toy box, full of books and toys, with the boys whenever they go visit their father's family. "She is very involved in every visit and is determined that her sons will thrive in school," says Site Coordinator, Annie Soustek.

New Faces at The Parent-Child Home Program

The Parent-Child Home Program is pleased to welcome the following new board members and replication sites:

Board Members

Tracy Dodd (Computer Associates; Islandia, NY)

Eric Hess (Lehman Brothers; New York, NY)

Everett Miles (McKinsey & Company; New York, NY)

Jane C. Spencer (New York, NY)

Replication Sites

Washington, DC

Minnetonka, Minnesota

Support the Amazon.com Partnership

Anyone can help support The Parent-Child Home Program by shopping at Amazon.com through a link on our website's homepage (www.parent-child.org)! Be sure that you and your friends visit the webpage before making any purchases on Amazon.com.

Parent-Child Home Program Activities

Learning How to Stay Safe

In addition to ensuring that their children have the skills they will need to successfully navigate the classroom, parents also must equip young children with the tools they need to safely navigate their home and the world.

It is important to start talking to young children about safety as early as possible, but be sure to end each of these conversations by making them feel protected and loved. If you have more than one child, have one-on-one conversations or play sessions with each child so that you can customize the lesson to his/her age and personality. As young children begin socializing, it is important that they learn safety rules about strangers, but also feel confident enough to interact with others and try new things.

Here are some ways parents can help keep children safe:

At Home:

- ★ Make your home a 'safety zone' by childproofing cabinets and drawers that hold dangerous items like cleaning supplies and matches (or by placing these items in out-of-reach places for older kids).

- ★ Keep handguns and other weapons locked up in a case that only adults can access.
- ★ Always keep a close eye on young children around *any* amount of water or fluid, even one inch!

Outside:

- ★ Do not advertise your child's name on his clothing, school supplies, or backpack.
- ★ Teach your child to trust her "gut instinct." If a situation doesn't feel right, it usually isn't.
- ★ Encourage your child not to keep secrets from you.
- ★ Create a password or secret code that only you and your child know. If someone asks him to leave with them, that person should know the password or he should not go under any circumstances.
- ★ Teach your child who to ask for help in dangerous situations (for example, if she is lost or afraid of something) such as a police officer in uniform, a firefighter, or a store clerk.
- ★ Make sure your child knows his address, phone number, and how to call 911 for help.

You can incorporate safety rules about fire, water, poisonous items, and strangers into many kinds of play that increase your child's vocabulary or enhance the development of social skills at the same time. Here are a few examples:

Play It Out – Use dramatic play using yourselves or stuffed animals to demonstrate what to do in different scenarios. For example, ask your child what to do if there is a fire in the house or if she gets separated from you while you are at the store. If she does not act out an appropriate response, act it out yourself and have your child imitate your actions. Don't forget to explain all hazards in an age-appropriate manner.

Safe or Dangerous? – Help your children identify harmful items and activities by going around the house and pointing to different objects and asking them to call out 'Safe!' or 'Dangerous!' You can even label the items with different colored dots or with special stickers that remind children what's okay to touch and what's not.

THE PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM RECOMMENDS



Out & About (Adventures in the Roo World – Young Roo Series No. 3) by Pati Myers Gross* — This urban tale about hip kangaroos is part of a series of safety-focused children's books written by a retired police officer to help children be street smart when they are "out and about." The main characters, Runabout and Romper, are members of the 'Hip Hop Mob' and help children figure out what to do if they ever get separated from their parents while they are out. (Roo Publications)



No Dragons for Tea: Fire Safety for Kids (and Dragons) by Jean Pendziwol, Martine Gorbault* — This tale about a young girl and a careless dragon at the beach teaches children what to do in case of a fire in their homes. The rhyming text

and catchy cadence help small ones remember the story, especially "The Dragon's Fire-Safety Rhyme." Includes tips for parents. (Kids Can Press, Ltd.)

I Can Be Safe: A First Look at Safety by Pat Thomas, Lesley Harker* — This book gently addresses kids' fears and shows them ways that they can keep themselves safe. For example, they learn how to look both ways when crossing the road, wear special clothing for sports, learn their phone number and emergency numbers, and more. It features a guide to help parents use the book and other resources. (Barron's Educational Series)

* ALL books are available on our website by clicking on the Amazon.com link: www.parent-child.org

Seattle

(continued from page 1)

Atlantic Street Center has been helping families raise healthy and successful children since 1910. Site coordinator Deisha Rodgers notes that her families face many of the challenges that low-income families across the country must face. Along with “the gentrification of traditionally low-income neighborhoods and subsequent rises in housing costs,” families struggle with, “domestic violence, inadequate housing situations, unemployment, and discrimination.”

Ms. Rodgers says that over the past two years parents report that their children are “more confident, more engaged and playful” and have “stronger language skills, increased self-esteem, and stronger social skills.” One of her favorite stories is of a young family from Vietnam who just completed the Program. When they entered the Program, the mother spoke no English and the family was socially isolated. By the time they graduated from the Program this summer, both the mother and the son’s language skills in English and Vietnamese were remarkably improved and she is now involved in her community. Most importantly, her son is clearly ready to enter school.

The New Holly and Rainier Vista sites are run by Neighborhood House and are in their second year of services; each serves families in Seattle Housing Authority low-income housing. For the past 100 years, Neighborhood House has provided services such as Head Start, Early Head Start, employment assistance, and transportation solutions to local residents, 80-90% of whom are refugees and immigrants.

The sites’ home visitors and coordinators represent the various ethnic communities they serve and are all multi-lingual. Home visitors conduct visits in both the families’ first language and English, stimulating

verbal interaction in a language the family is comfortable with and responding to the families’ desire to learn English and prepare their young ones for school. Marcy Miller, who supervises home-based services at Neighborhood House, observes that most of their families have many children, often three or more children under the age of 5, creating additional parenting challenges.

The Neighborhood House coordinators have seen amazing changes in their families. “We had families that laughed at us when we enrolled them in the Program because they were not sure that a 2-year-old could sit and read books. Now that has changed. Children and families who have not had books or toys in their homes are sitting together and reading together,” Ms. Miller says.

Southwest Youth and Family Services site coordinator Annie Soustek says finding books that represent her families’ diverse origins is a challenge. “Although many books are translated into other languages, they don’t necessarily represent the homes, people, dress, food or animals of other countries,” she explained, “so these books turn out to be a rich source of dialogue for our children and parents.”

Like many Parent-Child Home Program sites across the country, the Seattle sites grapple with the unique challenges of serving immigrant families such as language barriers, differing cultural expectations for young children, and navigating school and housing systems. Ms. Soustek explains that some of her parents had little schooling, cannot read or write in their own language and are in great need of other services, such as ESL and citizenship classes, family counseling and women’s support groups, to which Southwest Youth & Family Services regularly connects them. The Parent-Child Home Program is meeting their needs and working for them. As one parent noted, “My daughter will not have to struggle in school like I did.”

Thank You To Our Recent Supporters

Thank you to all those who have supported The Parent-Child Home Program’s national center. Your support enables the Program to reach out to new families in new communities, as we strive to ensure that all children have the opportunity to enter school ready to learn.

Our Recent Foundation and Corporate Supporters

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50th wedding anniversary

New Book Cites The Parent-Child Home Program

A new book by Dr. Gene Maeroff titled *Building Blocks: Making Children Successful in the Early Years of School* includes a write up on The Parent-Child Home Program, citing it as a successful home visiting model for preparing children for school success. You can purchase *Building Blocks* on our website: www.parent-child.org.

Mark Your Calendars!

The Parent-Child Home Program

2007 Annual Conference

**will be held April 30 - May 1, 2007
at the Garden City Hotel in
Garden City, New York.**

Where to Find The Parent-Child Home Program

CALIFORNIA: Alameda, Fresno/Khmer Society, Fresno/FIRM, Los Angeles, Modesto, Santa Ana, Stockton/Charterhouse Center, Stockton/El Concilio, Stockton/Lincoln USD **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Georgetown University **FLORIDA:** Miami, Monticello, Wauchula **MAINE:** Danforth **MASSACHUSETTS:** Barre, Boston/Homeless Project, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Clinton, Fitchburg, Framingham, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Medford, Newton/Needham/Wellesley, North Adams, Northampton, Pittsfield, Plymouth, Quincy, Salem, Somerville, South Hadley, Springfield, Taunton, Waltham, Wareham, Watertown **MICHIGAN:** Ferndale, Pontiac **MINNESOTA:** Minnetonka **NEW JERSEY:** Camden, Monmouth County, Princeton/New Brunswick **NEBRASKA:** South Sioux City **NEW YORK:** Brentwood, Bridgehampton, Bronx/Inwood House, Bronx/Graham Windham, Bronx/Morris Heights Health Center, Brooklyn/SCO, Brooklyn/Excellence Academy, Buffalo, Center Moriches, Centereach, East Ramapo, Farmingdale, Freeport, Glen Cove, Great Neck/Manhasset, Hempstead, Nanuet, North Rockland, Nyack, Oyster Bay, Port Washington Library, Port Washington School District, Queens/SCO, Ramapo Central, Roslyn, Shirley, Westbury, White Plains, William Floyd, Suffolk County Homeless Program **OHIO:** Cleveland **PENNSYLVANIA:** Allentown, Altoona, Armstrong County, Beaver County, Bedford/Hyndman, Cambria County, Chestnut Ridge/NBC, Columbia County, Easton, Elk/McKean Counties, Erie, Everett/Tussy Mountain, Fulton/Juniata/Mifflin Counties, Greene County, Hanover, Huntingdon, Indiana County, Lancaster, Luzerne County-East, Luzerne County-South, Luzerne County-West/Tunkhannock, Lycoming-Clinton, McKees Rocks, Monessen, Nanticoke, Northumberland County, Philadelphia, Phillipsburg, Scranton, Washington County, West Tunkhannock **SOUTH CAROLINA:** Aiken-Barnwell SD, Anderson SD#1, Anderson SD#2, Barnwell SD#19, Barnwell SD#45, Clarendon SD#1, Clarendon SD#3, Clover SD, Columbia, Darlington SD, Dillon SD#1, Dillon SD#2, Dillon SD#3, Dorchester SD#2, Dorchester SD#4, Florence SD#1, Florence SD#2, Florence SD#3, Florence SD#4, Florence SD#5, Fort Mill SD, Georgetown, Horry County Schools, Lexington SD#1, Marion SD#1, Marion SD#2, Richland SD#1, Rock Hill SD#3, Williamsburg County Schools, Williston-Barnwell District #29, York SD#1 **WASHINGTON:** Coupeville, Seattle/Atlantic Center, Seattle/Rainier Vista Area, Seattle/Neighborhood House, Seattle/New Holly Area, Yakima/Highland School, Yakima/West Valley **INTERNATIONAL SITES – BERMUDA:** Hamilton **CANADA:** Brandon, Manitoba **NETHERLANDS:** Amsterdam, Den Bosch, Maastricht, Roermond, Rotterdam, Stein, Velthoven, Weert.

Site Supervisor Goes to Capitol Hill

Pennsylvania site supervisor, Rose Williams, spoke at a congressional briefing in the spring to garner support for the Education Begins At Home Act (S. 503 and H.R. 3628). This legislation would provide \$400 million in grants to states over three years for early childhood education home visitation programs and is officially endorsed by 15 major national children's organizations, as well as its original sponsors: Senators Kit Bond (R-MO), Jim Talent (R-MO) Michael DeWine(R-OH) and Representative Danny Davis (D-IL). EBHA has 18 cosponsors in the Senate and 64 in the House of Representatives. Ms. Williams spoke from years of experience about the powerful impact that a continuum of intensive home-based services has on families facing major challenges to school success.



Rose Williams speaks up for home visiting at a congressional briefing held this spring.

*Soaring to Success
Through Books and Play...*



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