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ChildCareGroup

ChildCareGroup's Semi-Annual Newsletter
for those who care for and about young children

Spring 2006

Child at the Center

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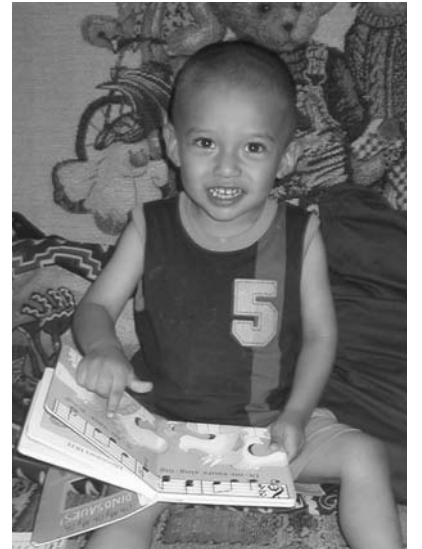
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What Brain Research Says About Language Development

Every day, parents and child care providers learn more about how the brain develops in young children. One of the most discussed findings of the new research is that there are windows of opportunity in the brain for learning —prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills.

The brain is primed for learning language in the first year of life, up to age 10. Although one can learn language after age 10, it is harder. Think about your own experience attempting to learn a new language as an adult.

The early capacity for language development is why babies need to be spoken to early and often, even though we know they don't yet understand. The way they hear is critical; television, tapes, and computers won't do the trick. Babies learn to talk only inside a relationship with a caring adult. Being held, played with, and comforted— and hearing language as part of that experience—shapes the baby's capacity to learn.



WHAT TO TALK ABOUT?

- Anything and everything. Even the simple act of echoing the baby's vocalization helps him develop language.
- Talking about everyday routines; using words to convey feelings, ideas, and concepts; and helping the child learn the right word will build his vocabulary (a toddler can just as easily say *tall* to describe a six-footer or skyscraper as he can say *big*).
- The number of words in a child's vocabulary by age three is a strong predictor of how well he will do in school.

How fortunate that his very best teachers are the adults who love and care for him each day.

TRUE OR FALSE ~

- The experiences you have before age three play a limited role on later development.
- A toddler's brain is much less active than the brain of a college student.
- How one's brain develops reflects the genes a person is born with.

If all your answers were false, you are correct. Congratulations!

Since 1901, ChildCareGroup has pioneered exemplary child care solutions for families, providers, employers, and the community.

Our mission is to promote, deliver, and expand the best child care services available outside the home.



Every day, ChildCareGroup is responsible for providing or managing the care of more than 14,000 children from low-income families.

The Zula Patrol's Ready, Set - Science! Workshop

Details: The Zula Patrol is joining with The Science Place to bring science and astronomy to Dallas parents, teachers, and young children (ages 5 to 7)! Parents, sign up today – and pass this flier on to your child's teacher!

When: April 22nd is the launch date for a series of interactive workshops to be held at The Science Place on the first and third Saturdays of every month.

Times: • K-2 Teacher Workshop from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM
• Parent-Child Workshop from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Place: The Science Place

Cost: Please call The Science Place for additional registration and pricing information.

To Enroll: Please email reserve@scienceplace.org or call (214) 428-5555 and press 8.

Reserve your spot today – each workshop has a maximum of 20 participants!

Interactive workshops will:

- Show how to use *The Zula Patrol* TV show (KERA Channel 13) and outreach resources to engage young children in science and astronomy
- Provide CPU credit for teachers
- Demonstrate how science is part of everyday life for parents and children
- Include engaging, hands-on activities tied to National Standards
- Model how to use educational TV as a teaching tool (using PBS' "View, Read, Do" learning triangle)



ChildCareGroup, a not-for-profit organization, offers its services, programs, and activities to eligible participants without regard to race, gender, national origin, color, age, religion, disability or political belief. \$51,057,987 or 94.5% of the cost of ChildCareGroup's programs are provided by the federal government; \$2,975,665 or 5.5% are provided by non-federal government sources. Persons who wish to receive information about participation in ChildCareGroup's programs may call 214.630.7911.



ChildCareGroup's revolutionary model of care, **Relationship-Centered Child Care® (RC³™)**, focuses on building relationships with families and children.



How well children do in school and in adult life is often determined by their interactions with caring adults at very young ages.



Celebrating Reading Milestones

"Just think how we celebrate children's first words and even their first sounds. We pick them up and hug and squeeze them. We laugh with glee. We have them say the words over the telephone to a distant relative or friend. We can't stop celebrating and reinforcing these remarkable achievements.

"Think about how we celebrate children's first steps. Again we are exuberant. We have them demonstrate this new skill to everyone. We are happy at first just to see them stand with balance. Then one step delights us. Two steps is even more exciting. And when a child takes several steps between two loving parents she receives support from start to finish.



"Reading needs this same attention to celebration. It is equally as complex a task as speaking

and walking. Find ways to celebrate each tiny accomplishment along the way to mastery. Bring in other children and teachers to listen to the group story your class has written. Build and develop class cheerleaders. Children are very interested in peer approval. Be sincerely enthusiastic about children's ability to hear rhyming sounds. Encourage children to use a checklist to check off skills as they accomplish them. Have a Green Eggs and Ham Party when children become competent in inserting the predictable lines in the story."

"A Joyful Journey to Literacy," by Pam Schiller, ChildCareExchange, January 2006

Funding Shortage for Subsidized Child Care



Commentary by Susan Hoff, President/CEO ChildCareGroup
KERA 90.1 ~ DALLAS, TX

"Child care is a daily concern for millions of parents. Every day, approximately 12 million infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers spend all or part of their day in care outside the home. Millions more school-age children need safe and enriching experiences available after school. Quality child care and after-school opportunities can make a real difference in whether these children succeed and stay in school. Child care is also a big issue for employers . . . Many parents, particularly low-income parents, have serious difficulties gaining access to the child care and after-school care necessary to meet both their children's needs and their employer's expectations.

"Parents in low-wage jobs struggle to afford the high cost of care. Some pay as much as half of their weekly paycheck in order to put their children in the best possible child care setting. Others are forced to resort to placing their children in (substandard) care . . . , simply because they cannot afford better options. Child care assistance, provided through the Federal Child Care Development Block Grant, can be a lifeline for these parents by helping them afford decent child care and keep their jobs. In Texas these funds flow through the Texas Workforce Commission. ChildCareGroup manages a large portion of these funds, placing more than 14,000 Dallas County children in care every day.

"Despite the importance of child care assistance . . . appropriations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant have been essentially flat for five years. Without increased federal funds, states have made fewer families eligible for child care assistance, raised parents' share of the costs, and cut back reimbursement rates to already low-paid child care providers. Overall, 250,000 fewer children now receive child care assistance than in 2000. . . . by 2011, 650,000 children will have lost child care assistance according to the Administration's own budget tables.

"A study that compiled interviews with low-income parents and child care providers demonstrated the impact of these child care cutbacks. One parent who lost her child care assistance said, ". . . I have two boys in need of child care. If I do not receive child care within the next upcoming weeks, I will have no other choice but to resign from my job—this cut will put me back to the welfare line. Please, I've worked hard to stay off welfare. I do not want to return to that road. . . ."



"In order to restore assistance to families such as these, Congress needs to include a \$540 million increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in the 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. This will help make up for ground lost because of inadequate funding in recent years and will provide help to at least a portion of the 250,000 children who have lost assistance . . .

"Tough economic times call for tough choices about limited resources . . . We can't abandon the parents who want desperately to work toward achieving the American Dream and we shouldn't leave our youngest and most vulnerable citizens out in the cold."

Three Governors Tour Bock ChildCareGroup Center

EXCERPTS FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS—JAMIE STENGLE

Governor Rick Perry showed off one of ChildCareGroup's centers, Bock Child Development Center in Oak Cliff, recently to fellow governors Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Matt Blunt of Missouri as he touted a Texas program created to help youngsters prepare for school.



"I always like to show Texas off, and we're mighty proud of Texas for appropriate reasons and I wanted to bring them over here today and show them what's happening," said Perry.

In 2003, the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) initiative funded early start centers in 15 Texas communities.

It was recently expanded to 20 communities, according to a release from Perry's office. "By the time they reach the school classroom, early start children are prepared to succeed in reading and writing and in math," Perry said. "A child prepared early is more likely to succeed later."

The visit gave officials at the Bock Center the opportunity to show off how they prepare children for school. With three governors looking on, 4-year-old Rebecca Valdez named off letters as cards rapidly flipped by. Her teacher demonstrated how she can plug Rebecca's results into a Palm Pilot that links to the State Center for Early Childhood Development and get feedback on additional activities that Rebecca might be ready to try.

"It was nice for the governors to get in there and see what goes on in the classroom," said Susan Hoff, CEO and president of ChildCareGroup.



This is the Bock Center's first year to participate in this initiative.

Are any of your parents members of the U.S. Army?

If you are currently caring for children of an Army family and are an accredited center or a provider with a CDA, you may be eligible for a one-time stipend and the family may be eligible for a child care subsidy. For more information, please contact Stacey Cochran at 214.905.3521 or e-mail her at scochran@ccgroup.org or visit our website at www.ChildCareGroup.org.

Texas Early Education Model (TEEM)

Certifying Higher Level of School Readiness in Cost Effective Ways

This education model is part of Senate Bill 23, passed in the last special session as a continuing effort for the previously funded project, *Texas Early Education Model (TEEM): Achieving Higher Levels of School Readiness in Cost Effective Ways*, a part of Senate Bill 76.

Dr. Susan Landry, Director of the State Center for Early Childhood Development and the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE), both housed at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, announced the twenty Texas communities that will participate in the TEEM project over the next two years.

Dallas is among the twenty communities participating in the TEEM project. A very balanced proportion of the more than 900 classrooms is present across ISD Pre-K (39%), Head Start (33%), and child care (28%) programs.

ChildCareGroup's Child Development Centers in Oak Cliff, East and West Dallas, and Irving are four of 41 programs participating in the TEEM project in the Dallas area.