



OFFICE OF SPEECHWRITING

TO: Katherine Searcy
Fax # _____ Phone # _____

FROM: Jim Shill
Fax # (202) 456-5709 Phone # (202) 456-2777

NOTES: _____

**UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THESE MATERIALS
IS SUBJECT TO FEDERAL PROSECUTION.**

If there are any problems with the transmission of this facsimile, please call (202) 456-2777.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I said to one mother cradling a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Bill and I knew that talking and reading to Chelsea was not only fun, but also helped her begin talking and reading on her own. But we couldn't say why. Until now. In the past few years, researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents had always suspected: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant strengthens the bond between a parent and child and helps the child develop emotionally and intellectually. In fact, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's chest -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation

and loving attention from adults in these early years, a child is far less likely to live up to his emotional and intellectual potential.

This week, Bill and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific findings -- most of them the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 80 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

I'm excited about the conference for a number of reasons. First, we hope to share ways to help parents make sense of and apply this new knowledge in their daily interactions with children. Second, we hope to spur lawmakers, educators and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in policy-making. Given what we now know about the first years of life, we have an even greater responsibility to bring issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet

enduring, debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life. The new research offers evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and potential are far from completely determined at birth. And we can work together to provide all children with the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing they need to become healthy and productive citizens.

Today, just 39 percent of parents read to their infants and toddlers daily. But we are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to change this statistic and make good use of the new knowledge about the importance of reading in the early years. This week, I announced a new national partnership among several sectors of our society to encourage more parents to read regularly to their infants and toddlers.

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, will "prescribe" reading aloud to young patients and their parents during every visit. Publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and non-profit organizations such as First Book have promised to contribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country that serve needy families. And through its Born to Read program, the American Library Association will work with the nation's 16,000 public libraries to establish partnerships with health care professionals to teach the critical importance of reading and pre-school learning.

But with all this attention on the importance of the first three years, let's not lose sight of

the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. As any parent who has shepherded a child from infancy through adolescence can tell you, children need the love of parents, the attention of teachers and the guidance of mentors at all stages of growing up. As a country whose continuing prosperity depends on unlocking the potential of all our citizens, we can't afford to leave any of our children behind.

###



OFFICE OF SPEECHWRITING

TO: Katherine & Anita

Fax # 310 337 7625 Phone # 310 337 7003

FROM: June

Fax # (202) 456-~~5709~~ 5640 Phone # (202) 456-2777

NOTES: _____

**UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THESE MATERIALS
IS SUBJECT TO FEDERAL PROSECUTION.**

If there are any problems with the transmission of this facsimile, please call (202) 456-2777.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I asked one mother holding a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

Back then, I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Bill and I knew that talking and reading to Chelsea was not only fun, but important. Somehow, this activity helped her begin talking and reading earlier. But we couldn't say why. Until now. In the past few years, researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents had already suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant not only strengthens the bond between parent and child, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's chest -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation in these first three years, a child is far less likely to live up to his emotional and intellectual

potential.

This week, the President and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific discoveries -- most of it the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 60 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

 I'm excited about the conference for a number of reasons. First, we hope to share ways to help parents make sense of and apply the new knowledge in their daily interactions with children. Second, we hope to spur lawmakers and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in public policy-making and in business decisions. Given what we now know about the first years of life, there are few more convincing arguments for bringing issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet enduring debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life. The new research we will highlight at the conference offers evidence that we are the result of

both. Our character and potential are far from completely determined at birth. And all of us can work together to provide every child with the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing to become healthy and productive citizens.

We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to make good use of this new knowledge. On Wednesday, I announced a new and innovative partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to “prescribe reading” to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book have promised to distribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics has also agreed to make prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let’s not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. As any parent who has shepherded a child from infancy through adolescence can tell you, our children need the love of parents, the attention of teachers and the guidance of mentors at all stages of growing up. And, as a country whose continuing prosperity depends on unlocking the potential of all our citizens, we have the

obligation to make sure everyone, regardless of age, has every opportunity to learn and succeed.

We can't afford to waste a single person or leave ~~behind~~ any of our children behind.

###

39 percent
Today show.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I asked one mother holding a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

Back then, I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Bill and I knew that talking and reading to Chelsea was not only fun, but important. Somehow, this activity helped her begin talking and reading earlier. But we couldn't say why. Until now. In the past few years, researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents had already suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant not only strengthens the bond between parent and child, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's chest -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation in these first three years, a child is far less likely to live up to his emotional and intellectual potential.

This week, the President and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific discoveries -- most of it the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 60 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

I'm excited about the conference for a number of reasons. First, we hope to share ways to help parents make sense of and apply the new knowledge in their daily interactions with children. Second, we hope to spur lawmakers and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in public policy-making and in business decisions. Given what we now know about the first years of life, there are few more convincing arguments for bringing issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet enduring debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life. The new research we will highlight at the conference offers evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and potential are far from completely determined at birth. And all of us can work together to provide every child with the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing to become healthy and productive citizens.

We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to make good use of this new knowledge. On Wednesday, I announced a new and innovative partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to "prescribe reading" to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book have promised to distribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics has also agreed to make prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let's not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. As any parent who has shepherded a child from infancy through adolescence can tell you, our children need the love of parents, the attention of teachers and the guidance of mentors at all stages of growing up. And, as a country whose continuing prosperity depends on unlocking the potential of all our citizens, we have the obligation to make sure everyone, regardless of age, has every opportunity to learn and succeed. We can't afford to waste a single person or leave behind any of our children behind.

###

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I asked one mother holding a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

Back then, none of us knew the importance of talking to our babies. Those of us who did talk to our infants thought it was just a fun way to bond and spend time with them. If our babies began talking earlier or built larger vocabularies, then all the better. But recently, scientists have confirmed what many parents had already suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant not only strengthens the bond between parent and child, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's breast -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation in these first three years ~~life~~, a child is far less likely to fulfill his emotional and intellectual potential.

This week, the President and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific discoveries -- the majority of them made by government-sponsored researchers at the National Institutes of Health and other laboratories across the country -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 60 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country.

I'm excited about this conference for a number of reasons. First, we will be finding and sharing the best ways to help parents make sense of and apply the new knowledge in their daily interactions with their youngest children. Second, we will be spurring lawmakers and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in public policy-making and in business decisions. Given what we now know about the importance of intellectual and emotional stimulation throughout the first three years of life, I hope that issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving and setting national standards for child care can move to the forefront of our domestic agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet enduring debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life. The new research we will highlight at the conference offers conclusive evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and intellect are far from completely determined at birth. And all of us can work together to make sure every child has the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing to fulfill his or her potential.

We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to make good use of this new knowledge. On Wednesday, I announced a new and innovative partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to "prescribe reading" to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book have promised to distribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics has also agreed to make prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let's not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. We have the opportunity and the obligation to make sure everyone, regardless of age, can keep on learning throughout life. We cannot afford to waste a single person or leave behind any of our children behind.

###

First Lady Announces National Partnership to Prescribe Reading to Infants and Toddlers
DRAFT DRAFT

"There are few things that I believe could make a more dramatic difference over the next 10 years in this country than to persuade parents of all educational and economic levels to take this mission of reading to and talking with their young babies seriously."

-- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, January 10, 1997

New Partnership to Prescribe Reading and Ensure That Children Who Come to the Doctor Have Access to Books. The First Lady is pleased to announce that a new partnership is forming to prescribe reading to infants and toddlers. Pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries are coming together to make sure that infants and toddlers who come to the doctor have access to books and are read to regularly.

The new partnership has already secured:

- More than 250,000 books to be distributed through health clinics and centers around the country;
- Commitments to train 10,000 pediatricians and 950 community health centers to prescribe reading and provide books to children by the year 2000.

The partnership, led by Scholastic Inc., First Book, and Reach Out and Read, includes the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of Community Health Centers, National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions, American Library Association, Reading Is Fundamental, Random House, Mellon Trust, American Booksellers Association, and the National Chain Drug Store Association, and seeks additional partners.

Reach Out and Read is already being used in more than 80 health centers and hospitals around the country. Through this program, health care professionals are prescribing reading, using books in well-visits, and giving books to children -- often the first in their home.

Call to Ensure That Every Child Under Age Five Is Read to Regularly by the Year 2000. The First Lady is calling for every community to come together around its local library in partnership with local health providers to help encourage reading to young children and ensure that every child under age five is read to regularly by the year 2000. Today, less than half of all parents read to their children regularly [check]. Research shows that low-income parents who are prescribed reading and given books when they visit the doctor are *four times* more likely to report reading to their children [AMA, AJDC, 8/91].

Response to the President's America Reads Challenge and The First Lady's Call For a National Effort to Prescribe Reading to Infants and Toddlers. Today's announcement is in direct response to the First Lady's call in January for a national effort to build on the existing efforts to prescribe reading -- by programs such as Reach Out and Read and the American Library Association's Born to Read -- and to the President's America Reads Challenge to help parents be their children's first teacher and ensure that every child can read well by the end of third grade.

The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning Will Underscore the Importance of Reading to Infants and Toddlers. *The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children* will explore new research that shows that reading to children in their first few years actually helps their brain to grow in addition to enhancing their emotional and social development and laying the groundwork for vocabulary and later reading success. As a result, the American Academy of Pediatrics is announcing that it is making prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I asked one mother holding a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look~~ed~~ and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

Back then, none of us knew the importance of talking to our babies. Those of us who did talk to our infants thought it was just a fun way to bond and spend time with them. If our babies began talking earlier or built larger vocabularies, then all the better. But recently, scientists have confirmed what many parents had already suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant not only strengthens the bond between parent and child, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's breast -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation in these first three years, a child is far less likely to fulfill his emotional and intellectual potential.

This week, the President and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific discoveries -- most of it the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and ~~our~~ society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 60 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

I'm excited about ~~this~~ conference for a number of reasons. First, we ~~will be finding and sharing the best ways to help parents make sense of and apply the new knowledge in their daily interactions with their youngest children.~~ ^{scientists have b} Second, we will be ~~spurring~~ ^{making} lawmakers and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in public policy-making and in business decisions. Given what we now know about the first years of life, there are few more convincing arguments for bringing issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet

enduring debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life. The new research we will highlight at the conference offers ~~conclusive~~ evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and intellect are far from completely determined at birth. And all of us can work together to make sure every child has the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing to fulfill his or her potential.

This week
We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to make good use of this new knowledge. On Wednesday, I announced a new ~~and innovative~~ partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents. →

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to "prescribe reading" to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book have promised to distribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics has also agreed to make prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let's not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. We have the opportunity and the obligation to make sure everyone, regardless of age, can keep on learning throughout life. And we cannot afford to waste a single person or leave behind any of our children behind.

###

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I asked one mother holding a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

Back then, I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Bill and I knew that talking and reading to Chelsea was not only fun, but also helped her begin talking and reading on her own. But we couldn't say why. Until now. In the past few years, researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents had already suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant not only strengthens the bond between parent and child, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's chest -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation

and loving attention from adults in these ^{early} first three years, a child is far less likely to live up to his emotional and intellectual potential.

This week, the President and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific discoveries -- most of it the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to ^{over 80} ~~some 60~~ schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

I'm excited about the conference for a number of reasons. First, we hope to share ways to help parents make sense of and apply the new knowledge in their daily interactions with children. Second, we hope to spur lawmakers and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in ~~public~~ policy-making and in business decisions.

[Given what we now know about the first years of life, ^{we have an even greater responsibility} ~~there are few more convincing arguments~~ ^{to} for bringing issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.]

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet

enduring debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life.

The new research ~~we will highlight at the conference~~ offers evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and potential are far from completely determined at birth. And all of us can work together to provide every child with the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing to become healthy and productive citizens.

We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to make good use of this new knowledge.

Earlier this week,

~~On Wednesday~~, I announced a new and innovative partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to "prescribe reading" to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book have promised to distribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics has also agreed to make prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let's not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. As any parent who has shepherded a child from

infancy through adolescence can tell you, children of all ages ^{need adult stimulation +} ~~are constantly amazing us with~~
^{at every stage of growth} ~~their ability to absorb new knowledge and pick up new skills. And they need the love of parents,~~
the attention of teachers and the guidance of mentors at all stages of growing up. As a country
whose continuing prosperity depends on unlocking the potential of all our citizens, ~~we have the~~
~~obligation to make sure everyone, regardless of age, has every opportunity to learn and succeed.~~
We can't afford to ~~waste a single person or~~ leave any of our children behind.

###

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I asked one mother holding a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

Back then, I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Bill and I knew that talking and reading to Chelsea was not only fun, but important. Somehow, this activity helped her begin talking and reading earlier. But we couldn't say why. Until now. In the past few years, researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents had already suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant not only strengthens the bond between parent and child, it literally helps a baby's brain grow.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's chest -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation

in these first three years, a child is far less likely to live up to his emotional and intellectual potential.

This week, the President and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific discoveries -- most of it the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 60 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

I'm excited about the conference for a number of reasons. First, we hope to share ways to help parents make sense of and apply the new knowledge in their daily interactions with children. Second, we hope to spur lawmakers and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in public policy-making and in business decisions. Given what we now know about the first years of life, there are few more convincing arguments for bringing issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet

enduring debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life. The new research we will highlight at the conference offers evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and potential are far from completely determined at birth. And all of us can work together to provide every child with the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing to become healthy and productive citizens.

We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to make good use of this new knowledge. On Wednesday, I announced a new and innovative partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to "prescribe reading" to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book have promised to distribute hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics has also agreed to make prescribing reading to infants and toddlers part of standard pediatric care and pediatric medical education.

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let's not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. As any parent who has shepherded a child from

infancy through adolescence can tell you, our children need the love of parents, the attention of teachers and the guidance of mentors at all stages of growing up. And, as a country whose continuing prosperity depends on unlocking the potential of all our citizens, we have the obligation to make sure everyone, regardless of age, has every opportunity to learn and succeed. We can't afford to waste a single person or leave any of our children behind.

###

PRESS BRIEFING ON BRAIN CONFERENCE
APRIL 14, 1997

HRC: We are, this week, going to have a conference, about the latest on brain development in young children and implications of that for every sector of society, starting with parents and family members, including educators, community leaders, political and business leaders, and the like. This is an issue that we believe has absolutely profound implications for how we view and treat our youngest children. And it certainly has such implications for how families perceive XXX of their babies, and what that must mean, we hope, for them in terms of the parenting that goes on. But it also has implications, for the larger society, in terms of public policy grounds.

At the conference on Thursday, you'll be hearing from only a few of the experts and leaders in this field as well as people from various organizations that are attempting to implement what this research means for young children. We are fortunate to have two experts with us today, who have been involved in this research and the policy implications of it, for many years and will be speaking to that.

Dr. Alexander is the Director of the National Institute of Child Health, it is, I think fair to say, Dr. Alexander, the premier institution in the world for research into child development. It is a federal government agency, funded by the federal government, without which it would not exist, could not have done the ground breaking work that has flowed from the years of investment in this kind of work. And Dr. Alexander is one of the members of a broad committee that has put together a report that you're getting an advance copy of, in the material in front of you, called *Rethinking the Brain*. There's just an enormous amount of information in here that you'll get a chance, at least, to review later.

Dr. David Hamburg is the current President of the Carnegie Foundation, he's a psychologist, he started his career at the National Institute of Child Health and Development. He has served on the faculties of premier universities in our nation. He has been a leader in the effort to try to take what medicine and scientific research tells us, and put it into practice. Most recently, through his leadership at the Carnegie Corporation, he has been sounding the alarm, if you will, but also providing the data, about what we need to do for our youngest children. In your material also, you'll have a copy of the Carnegie Corporation's report called *Starting Points*, which I believe is one of the best explanations of this material for lay people like me, that there is in the country.

Part of the reason why I'm so excited about this, and why I think it's so important, is that for many years, I've worked on behalf of children's issues, and worked to take what scientists like Dr. Alexander, and Dr. Hamburg have done, and put it into usable form for policy. It has been, I think, an ongoing challenge, to try to take scientific research and translate it in usable form. When I wrote my book, *It Takes a Village*, it was shortly after *The Bell Curve* had come out, and there was a lot of talk,

and quite a bit of hype, about The Bell Curve. And the message of The Bell Curve that was being translated by the media was that you were born with whatever kind of brain you had, the capacity you had, and there wasn't much anybody could do to reshape that intellectual potential and so why spend all this time worrying about things like prenatal care and early childhood education. It was in many ways, a very pessimistic message about human capacity that looked like it was all dressed up in science. When I wrote my book, I deliberately wrote a chapter, which I've given you a copy of, that in the best way I knew how, and as simple terms as I understood it, takes some of this scientific research, and explains why we are the result of both, nature and nurture. The debate about are we the result of genetics or the environment, should really be called a draw, we are the results of both and what we're finding out is how each is shaped and what we can do to try to maximize our potential development both by the environment and using the information that we have now from genetics.

I wrote this chapter saying that the bell curve is curve ball, because I thought the implications of that message would be ultimately counter-productive both to parenting, because if parents believe that there is nothing they can do, that genetics is the primary motivating force of a child's development, than they would not be as engaged as a parent. And if the rest of us thought that it didn't make any difference what our public policy was, than we'd essentially be leaving parents to their own devices. While I'm grateful that my efforts were not a single tiny voice because shortly after that Starting Points, and this cascade of research began, research was just pouring out in ways that I think are going to be very hard to ignore.

We think there are some common sense steps that individuals and institutions can take, and we'll be laying some of those out Thursday at the conference. Before the conference on Wednesday, I'll be having a press event, announcing the extension of a program I've talked about before called Reach out and Read, a Prescription for Reading program. To reach as many parents and adults as possible that reading to children, singing to children, all those old fashioned ways that we used to relate to children are not only a way to create a good feeling in children, to develop a a warm relationship, but they actually build the brain of a child.

So with that, building the brain, I want to turn to our two experts to explain far better than I, what all that means, and what we should be talking about, and those of you who report on big issues that effect the news everyday, might be thinking about this, which is not so easily understood to be as dramatic as it is, can have more impact on how we live, and what kind of country we have, and what kind of capacity our children have, than what passes for news on a day to day basis. So with that, I would like Dr. Hamburg to take the floor.

Dr. Hamburg: Thank you very much. From my background in biomedical research and education and patient care over many decades, with a boost coming from NIH in the 1950's, and stints on the faculties of Stanford and Harvard, I increasingly came to feel that it's very, very important, in a democracy, for people to understand very broadly, what is the latest, up to date, scientific information with respect to any important issue that affects people's lives, as far as healthy child and adolescent development, education, getting a good start on life.

So, when I came to be President of the Carnegie Foundation, technically called the Carnegie Corporation in New York, because Andrew Carnegie ran out of names by the time he got to the Foundation, but anyway, I felt that one of the main things we could do, would be to prepare from time to time, an intelligible, credible census on our knowledge of each phase of child and adolescent development. That is to look at the emerging scientific and professional consensus. What do we know about the essential requirements for healthy development in early childhood, middle childhood and early adolescence and later adolescence? So, I hoped, in my time, that we could cover the first two decades of life, in a reasonably systematic way. These [inaudible] were meant to be credible because they were based on the scientific research to the maximum extent possible. And also on community innovations that tried to put the knowledge to use for the benefit of children on a wide scale. And that they would be intelligible, because we would try and translate them from technical language to the language that would be meaningful to educated readers.

That's what we've tried to do with a series of reports, each of which is prepared by a distinguished body that's composed in the following way: About half are experts on the subject matter, albeit in different disciplines and backgrounds, and the remainder are from powerful sectors of the society that had a stake in the problem, or a reason to be concerned about it, even though they are not technically experts on the subject matter. People from business and from media, and from various other sectors of the society, the military and what not. They're carefully vetted and reviewed, these reports are, before they come out. There have been a series which we're trying to oppose now, they wanted to take it chronologically, the one on 0-3 is called Starting Points, and what we claim for it is that it has the most attractive picture of a baby on the cover as any of these. There's a little competition going between Time and Newsweek and Carnegie and the brain research report about who has the best picture of a baby on the cover. Aside from that, our Foundation has been very actively cooperating with all of these efforts to build public understanding of what the research says. The kind of thing coming out of Dr. Alexander's institute and other institutes around the world.

First of all, you get the facts straight, and then to try and consider what it might mean for parents and for community organizations. The way of structuring the problem in this developmental strategy, from conception through adolescence, is to ask what it is that people need to understand, to get the facts straight, and then to say, well, who could do something about that. Who could put that knowledge to use? And so we come to look at a set of pivotal institutions, sort of front line institutions, who everyday, have an impact, for better or for worse, on child development. That starts with the centers on strengthening families, but it also has to include the schools, in this case, early childhood education, pre-school schools, and it includes community organizations, including religious ones, it includes the media, whose impact, everyday, on

parents and children, is very significant. Of course, it includes the health care system.

Surrounding that set of front-line institutions, are other, powerful institutions in society, that can make their job easier or harder. I mean by that, government at all levels, business, scientific community, various relevant professions. So, we're saying that it takes a village and then some, really the whole society, as a set of institutions that bear on child development, whether we like it or not, they do have that bearing. We've tried to ask, how can each institution strengthen its contribution to health child development? That is the framework we used on the case of Starting Points. First we looked at, which came out just three years ago this month by the way, that report looks at brain development, but it looks at the development of the whole child. The brain is a very important part of the child, and it looks at it from conception on up. It's a very dramatic time from development from just two cells, to a zillion cells in utero, and the transition from being in utero, to being outside and then the first human attachments which are the underpinnings for decent human relationships throughout the life span. And that fantastic exploratory curiosity which needs to be nurtured if you're going to look toward life long learning. So, it's a very dramatic period, perhaps the most dramatic period, that 0-3.

We try to lay out what science has to say in an intelligible fashion, and then, we took four thrusts to try to make use of the knowledge for the benefit of children everywhere. One thrust has to do with preparation for responsible parenting. That is not only after pregnancy, but before pregnancy, we lay out a whole array of possibilities, ways in which people can be ready for responsible parenting. The second thrust is in health care, and primarily comprehensive prenatal care, and comprehensive primary care. We try to spell out how preparation for responsible parenting can be done, how comprehensive prenatal and primary health care can be done. The third thrust is on child care, early childhood education. What constitutes quality child care? How do you recognize it when you see it? How can quality be strengthened, and quality care made available throughout the country. It certainly is not at the present time. There is a new study on this from the NICHD released just last week. The fourth thrust of Starting Points is on community mobilization. That is the community, the village, how do you get the resources of decent, well meaning people, parents and community organizations, media and business in a community, coming together to assess what our needs are with respect to young children. And, how can we mobilize in this community to meet those needs? There are a lot of different ways of doing it all across the country. My last point would be that although these four thrusts of making use of the knowledge are subject to evaluative research so we can tell what works from whom under what conditions, that's not always the case, evaluative research lags behind. You have to make the best judgement you can about what's the best set of measures to take. The thrust of it is to pool our strengths and share the burdens in communities to provide the necessary conditions for healthy childhood development to stimulate brain and other development in the most constructive ways.

There are working models around the country. We tried to evaluate the working models as best we can. We tried not to just stick with hypothetical ideals. Wouldn't it be nice if you could do so and so. That can be useful but we tried to say, here are communities in which working models exist. For example, in which community organizations are reaching out to their families and young children in ways that get poor children taken care of better than we've done in the past.

The many, many examples scattered all through Starting Points, we tend to put in boxes. It's all about taking the research, as it evolves, and trying to understand it, have it largely understood, and putting it to use for the larger benefit of children everywhere.

Michael Levine

Reach out & Read /

Starting Points /

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

On a hot summer day in 1982, while helping Bill campaign for governor in a small Arkansas town, I approached a group of women and children and introduced myself. Chelsea -- who was just a toddler then -- was holding my hand when I ^{said to} ~~asked~~ ^{cradling} one mother ~~holding~~ a newborn, "I bet you're having fun, playing with her and talking to her all the time."

The woman gave me a baffled look and said, "Why would I talk to her? She can't talk back."

~~Back then~~, I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Bill and I knew that talking and reading to Chelsea was not only fun, but also helped her begin talking and reading on her own. But we couldn't say why. Until now. In the past few years, researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents had ^{always} ~~already~~ suspected for years: Time spent talking, singing, and reading to an infant ~~not only~~ ^{and} strengthens the bond between parent and child, ^{the child} ~~it~~ ^{develops emotionally + intellectually} ~~literally~~ helps a baby's brain grow. ^{in fact, it literally helps}

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully-formed. During the first three years of life, the brain is a sponge, absorbing every bit of activity in its environment. It must rely on the stimulation of its surroundings -- a mother's loving voice, sunlight from a window, the warmth of being held against a parent's chest -- to help connect its cells to each other and "turn on" the child's capacity to learn, feel, communicate, and relate to others. And without proper stimulation

and loving attention from adults in these early years, a child is far less likely to live up to his emotional and intellectual potential.

Bill
This week, ~~the President~~ and I will be hosting a day-long conference at the White House to discuss these new scientific ~~discoveries~~ ^{findings} -- most of ^{them} it the work of American scientists in government-sponsored labs such as the National Institutes of Health -- and what they mean not only to families, but to teachers, employers, lawmakers and our society as a whole. **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning** will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians and child development specialists with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others whom we will rely on to help put this new knowledge into practice. It will be transmitted via satellite to some 80 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the country

I'm excited about the conference for a number of reasons. First, we hope to share ways to help parents make sense of and apply ^{the} ~~the~~ new knowledge in their daily interactions with children. Second, we hope to spur lawmakers, educators and business leaders to recognize the role this information about early childhood development must play in policy-making. Given what we now know about the first years of life, we have an even greater responsibility to bring issues such as expanding early childhood education and improving child care to the top of our national agenda.

And most of all, I hope this conference will help lay to rest the counterproductive, yet

enduring, debate in our society over nurture vs. nature in determining a person's success in life.

The new research offers evidence that we are the result of both. Our character and potential are

far from completely determined at birth. And ^{we} ~~all of us~~ can work together to provide ^{all} ~~every~~ children with the physical, emotional, and intellectual nurturing ^{they need} to become healthy and productive citizens.

^{But} We are already witnessing some hopeful efforts to ^{change + important reading} ~~make~~ good use of this new knowledge.

~~This week, I announced a new and innovative partnership among pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers and libraries that came about, in part, because of the discoveries about the importance of reading to our youngest children. Today, just half of all infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents. (Checking?)~~

Through a national program called Reach Out and Read, pediatricians, who often are the first professionals to have regular contact with new families, have agreed to "prescribe reading" to their young patients and their parents. To make sure our neediest families have access to books, publishers such as Scholastic, Inc. and First Book ^{non-profits} have promised to ^{contribute} ~~distribute~~ hundreds of thousands of free books to health clinics across the country. And the American Academy of Pediatrics ^{is recommending that ped.} ~~has also agreed to make~~ prescribing reading to infants and toddlers ^{as} part of standard pediatric care ^{well-child visits.} ~~and pediatric medical education.~~

But with all this attention on the importance of first three years, let's not lose sight of the fact that learning is never a one-shot deal. As any parent who has shepherded a child from

infancy through adolescence can tell you, children need the love of parents, the attention of teachers and the guidance of mentors at all stages of growing up. As a country whose continuing prosperity depends on unlocking the potential of all our citizens, we can't afford to leave any of our children behind.

###

To Betty King
FAX →
Barry Z.

Reading to Child

Parents Aren't Reading Enough to Their Children Under Three

