



New scientific research shows that early experiences—particularly in the first three years of life—have a dramatic impact on brain development and establishing a lifelong pattern of learning. We know that the greatest opportunities for development and learning occur during the early years of life and that we adults have a unique role to play in helping young children develop fully.

Not all children will be "Academic All-Stars"; however, all children can develop their innate abilities to the fullest extent and become productive students throughout their public school career. Lessons learned as a preschooler often carry lifelong implications and set the path for future growth and development.

"Early experience has enduring impact on brain development," Dr. Donald Cohen, Director of Yale University Child Study Center at the White House Conference on Early Childhood

be taught through cooking the family dinner, measuring (fractions) and mixing (chemistry principles). These are fun ways for parent and child to spend productive time together in a learning experience, which seems more like play.

Social skills are an important part of early development

In order for a child to successfully participate in school, certain social skills are necessary. Young children must learn how to work in a group, get along with others and cooperate effectively. All of these skills are learned through trial and error as children mature and grow. A two-year-old who plays alone while in a group quickly matures into a 4-year-old who can share and play with other children.

THE FIRST YEARS LAST FOREVER: TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Each family is different. Each family has traditions and cultural expectations of their children. We know that there are certain things that all families can do to support their child's development. This can be done within the context of the home, childcare, church or other institutions that support families in your community.

"Babies are born to learn. It is our job to be good partners in the learning process," Dr. Patricia Kuhl, Chair of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington.

1. Be warm loving and responsive

We now know that children's early attachments actually affect the way their brains work and grow. When children receive warm, responsive care, they are more likely to feel safe and secure with the adults who take care of them. Researchers call these strong relationships "secure attachments" and they are the basis of the child's future relationships.

2. Respond to the child's cues and clues.

The cues and clues that infants send are the sounds they make, the ways they move, and the facial expressions they use. Children become securely attached when parents and other caregivers try to read these signals and respond with sensitivity. There are simple steps parents can take to build trust in their young children: the child smiles and someone smiles back; they are upset and someone comforts them; they are hungry and someone feeds them. Parents who respond to their children's needs for attention, during both active as well as quiet times, help their children form secure attachments.

BABIES ARE BORN TO LEARN

Children can develop their innate abilities to the fullest extent and become productive students throughout their public school career. Lessons learned as a preschooler often carry lifelong implications and set the path for future growth and development.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN & WHAT THEY NEED?

Young children develop at different stages and levels

Each child is unique and develops both physical and mental skills at their own pace. Some children walk earlier than others; some children are early talkers. There is no right or wrong pace of development and, unless there is some physical or mental impairment which causes delayed development, each child will eventually attain all the skills necessary to function well as an adult.

Physical development is as important during the early years as cognitive development

Physical skills go hand-in-hand with mental development. Young children may be mentally able to draw a certain picture; however, their fine motor skills (ability to hold a pencil or crayon) is not sufficient to allow them the control necessary to reproduce the figure. A child may know all their colors and numbers but not be able to use a pair of scissors successfully.

The family plays a critical role in the development of young children

Parents are the child's first teachers. Children with actively involved parents who take the time to read or to provide stimulating activities, develop quickly and typically surpass the achievement of children whose home environment is not as stimulating.

Young children learn best through hands-on activities and active learning

Young children learn most effectively through manipulation of objects and active learning experiences. For example, basic math principles can



cc: Nicole
Aelma



3. Talk, sing and read to your child.

Telling stories about daily events, reading children's books aloud, singing songs about the people and places your child knows, describing what is happening during daily routines—all of these interactions give your child a solid basis for later learning.

4. Establish routines.

Daily routines are reassuring for children. Teach your child to know it's nap time by performing a routine that the child can recognize. For example, sing a song and close the curtains everyday when it's time for a nap. Or, before bed, read a story to your child. These routines help children learn what to expect from their environment, and how to understand the world around them a little more easily. Repeated positive experiences provide children with a sense of security. Children who have safe and predictable interactions with others have been found to do better in school later on.

5. Encourage exploration and play.

As young children grow, they begin to explore the world beyond their parents and caregivers. Parents and caregivers should encourage this exploration and be receptive when the child needs to return to them for questions and security. While many of us think of learning as simply acquiring facts, children actually learn through playing.

6. Make television watching selective.

Television by itself can't teach a young child language and it can't teach a child how to communicate. Be selective and involved in your children's television habits. Don't use TV as a babysitter. Whenever possible, sit and watch programs together with your child and talk about what you're viewing.

7. Use discipline as an opportunity to teach.

As children explore their ever-expanding world, they need limits and consistent, loving adult supervision. Studies reveal that the way in which adults provide discipline is crucial to their children's later development. Many approaches to setting limits can work, as long as they are intended to help and teach children.

8. Recognize that each child is unique.

Children grow at different rates. Their ideas and feelings about themselves reflect, in large measure, parents' and caregivers' attitudes toward them. When children receive concrete praise, they begin to see the connections between their actions and your response. Parents and caregivers who are sensitive to their particular child's cues and clues will have children with positive self-esteem.

9. Choose quality childcare and stay involved.

To make a good childcare choice, visit and observe how providers and interact with the babies and children in their care. Seek a provider who responds warmly and responsively to your baby's needs.

Select someone who cares about children, is eager to learn about their development, and will give children individual attention and engage them in creative play and exploration. Find a setting that is clean and safe, and carefully check the provider's references.

"I tell parents that when you go into a classroom to observe child care, don't watch what they're doing with your child, watch what they're doing with other children." Dr. Richard Clifford, National Center for Early Development and Learning, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

10. Take care of yourself.

Parents and caregivers need care too. When you are exhausted, preoccupied, irritable or depressed, you will probably have a harder time meeting the needs of young children. When you feel overwhelmed, take care of yourself. Reach out and get some help. Families, friends, neighbors, pediatricians, childcare providers and others—all can assist you in fostering your child's healthy development.

(Parent Tips excerpted from materials developed for the I AM YOUR CHILD campaign)

LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission was created to ensure that the young children of Arkansas have access to high quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. We are working to ensure that all young children in Arkansas are "ready" for school and that early childhood programs provide the best quality care possible.

We can help if:

- You're trying to find an early childhood or child care program for your child. Call us at 682-4891 or 1-800-445-3316 and we'll provide you with a list of all registered and licensed child care programs in the area. This list will include homes, churches and day care centers.
- You need information on how to find parenting classes or other informational workshops. We'll give you information on who is offering this type of service and who to call.
- You have concerns that your child is not developing normally or is delayed. We'll provide you the names and numbers of organizations which will assist you in determining if your child could use some special help or is just taking his or her time!
- You have any questions about parenting or children. If we can't answer your question, we'll find someone who can.

We're here to help you and during the next six months will be expanding our services into a new Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education at the Department of Human Services. The State of Arkansas realizes the value of its young children and is actively working to support your efforts to ensure our future citizens are prepared for the next millennium. Let us know if we can help.

Hoggard, who taught at Caldwell Elementary in Benton always got involved with the kids. She didn't just sit at her desk. She sat on the floor with us and played with us. She made the learning fun."

MINDY ROGERS of North Little Rock remembers her sitter, a Mrs. Fryer. "She was almost like a grandmother. We were with her all through the day. We had a lot of special attention. She was real in touch with how we behaved. She was just a precious, precious lady."

LEE CHUNG of Lincoln, the son of South Korean immigrants, says his big sister, Isle, "taught me how to read and do math before I entered elementary, and taught me how to speak English. She was a big inspiration."



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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 22, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: MIKE McCURRY 

SUBJECT: Early Childhood Conference

Listed below please find the print, television and radio press outreach conducted by the Office of Media Affairs surrounding the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development. Additionally, we assigned cabinet members specific media markets to contact about their involvement in the conference. We would particularly like to thank Kris Balderston and Cabinet Affairs for their assistance. The satellite conferences they coordinated with regional administrators produced outstanding regional coverage. Attached please find news clips and a report detailing satellite hits resulting from the conference. Thank you.

Print

- * Conference notification and information was provided to more than 400 reporters across the country and 240 specialty publications, including African American, Hispanic, religious, education press and women's magazines. Pitched stories with conference participants, satellite sites, and supporters of children's health care plan to these regional and specialty press reporters.
- * Mailing to top 250 editorial boards in addition to specialty publications across the country.
- * Expanded pool opportunities on site to ensure that at least 50 reporters, representing more than 75 media outlets nationwide, had access to conference coverage.
- * Stories have resulted so far in the following publications or news services: Knight Ridder, Newhouse, New York Times, USA Today, Washington Times, Washington Post, St. Petersburg Times, Richmond Times Dispatch, Raleigh News and Observer, Boston Globe, and Los Angeles Times. In addition, stories are expected in the following magazines: Parents, Redbook, Newsweek, and Better Homes and Gardens.

Radio

- * Pitched conference panelists, cabinet secretaries and Administration officials on 10 nationally syndicated shows and to more than 40 stations in media markets across the country.
- * Coordinated interviews on WCBS (New York), American Urban Radio Network, National Public Radio, Children's Broadcasting Corporation, KCBS and KGO (San Francisco), KOMO (Seattle), KABC (Los Angeles), WBUR, WBZ (Boston), WBBM (Chicago), WJR (Detroit), as

well as on nationally syndicated shows including: Working Mom on the Run, Two Chicks on the Radio, Working Women and Building A World Fit for Children.

Television

* Event fed via satellite to more than 90 downlink locations across the country. Stories aired on more than 29 stations in 26 markets across the country from our satellite feed alone. This is in addition to network affiliate stories which also aired nationwide.

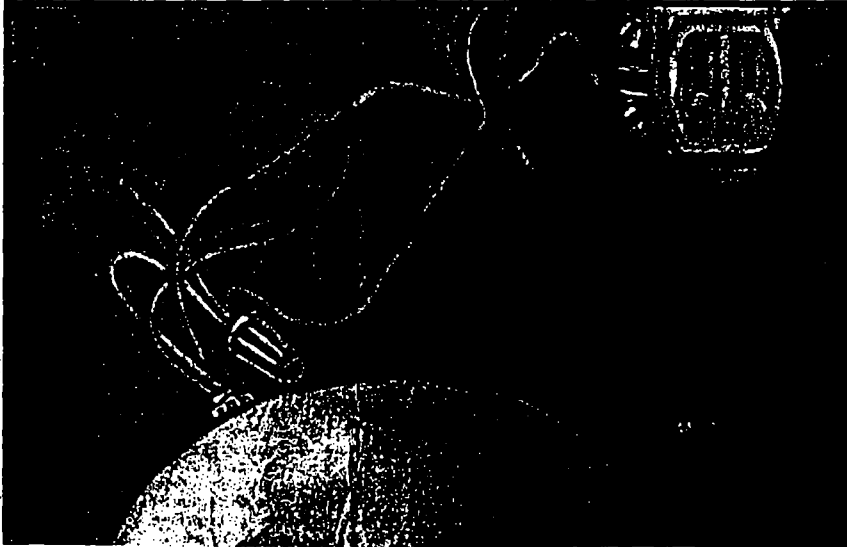
* Pitched conference, provided advance information and satellite coordinates to stations in all markets with a downlink location as well as those near the home of a conference participant.

* Contacted D.C. bureaus with conference information and interview opportunities. Coordinated two on site interviews with conference participants and audience members and provided advance information for news planning.

* Stories aired on network morning shows, Lifetime Television, CNN, NBC, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, and Nightline among others.

Child's play is serious business. Astonishing studies of the way infants' brains develop present news both hopeful and horrible: Children's major mental and emotional growth may peak just as society takes an interest.

PLUGGING INTO BABY'S BRAINPOWER



By ELLEN DEBENPORT
Times Staff Writer

That unfocused look in the eyes of a newborn baby reflects a significant scientific fact: Her brain isn't hooked up yet.

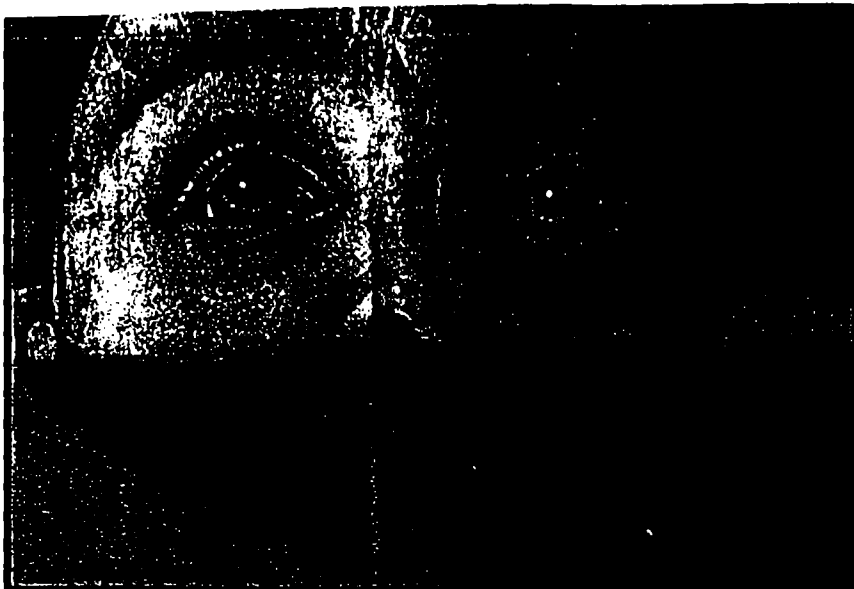
By the time she's 3, her brain will have wired its own neurons — about 100-billion brain cells — into pathways that will govern how she sees, hears, speaks and reacts for the rest of her life.

New research on the development of babies' brains shows the wiring depends not just on genes but on experience. The way a baby is taught and treated as a very young child may largely establish her intelligence and personality.

It's a heavy responsibility for parents, and the new information has implications for all society.

Are young children getting all the nurturing and stimulation they need? Are they being read to or hugged enough? What of children in day care? Should government try to make sure children turn out right?

If you haven't heard yet about the new science on babies' brains, just wait.



Times art — ROSIE NEWSON

President and Mrs. Clinton plan a Washington summit Thursday called the *White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children*.

A publicity blitz is planned for late April, called the Early Childhood Public Engagement Campaign. It is the brainchild of director Rob Reiner, who says his interest in young children stems from what he learned in psychoanalysis about his own early years.

Reiner's one-hour show April 28 on ABC, called *I Am Your Child*, will be hosted by Tom Hanks and feature Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, former Gen. Colin Powell, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rosie O'Donnell, Charlton Heston and others.

Newsweek has published a special edition to coincide with the show, and CBS' *Good Morning America* plans six special reports. NBC's *Today* show is airing reports this week.

Gov. Lawton Chiles, long an advocate for babies and young children, is disseminating brain research to legislators, agency heads and business people. An education specialist from Florida State University has traveled the state to spread the word.

Please see **BRAIN 40**

5 DAYS OLD

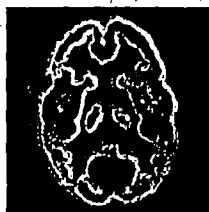


The brain of a newborn governs only the most basic motor functions. The dark colors indicate little activity in a brain that has not yet been "wired." The drawing below shows the electrical connections being made in the brain — relatively few as the baby eats, sleeps and cries.

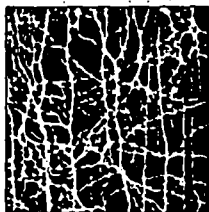


Photos courtesy Children's Hospital of Michigan, Wayne State University

6 YEARS OLD



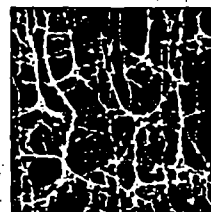
By age 6, the brain is a firestorm of activity. Red and yellow indicate the busiest brain, and the brain cells are furiously expanding the pathways among cells, shown below. The human brain is never more active than from ages 2 to 9. As children experience everything for the first time, they develop more brain pathways than they will eventually need.



ADULT



The adult has a more mellow brain, reflected by cooler colors, which has lost some of the brain-cell connections made in childhood. If neural pathways aren't used, they die. Others are established by repeated activity. The adult brain is literally set in its ways.



"At the time a baby is born, the brain is remarkably immature. Some of the cells — the neurons, the actual brain cells — are still moving into their proper positions. And they still have to hook up."

DR. WIL RIECHMAN

Brain

to any interested group. Some legislators want to use the new science to promote early childhood programs.

"It's the things that intuitively we've known," Chiles said. "We've known that kids that had that kind of nurturing always did well. What we didn't have was a day-to-day measurement, literally a snapshot of babies' brains."

Using something called a PET-scan, or Positron Emission Tomography, scientists can now watch the activity in a baby's brain as it develops language or emotions. They can see what difference a parent's voice or touch makes.

Hearing music, for instance, seems to develop math ability. Chiles is buying music CDs for his grandchildren. Researchers say Mozart works especially well.

"If you took all your kids from zero to 5 and did this" — that is, applied all the benefits of brain research — "in 10 or 15 years, you'd change the world," Chiles said.

The science

The results of the brain research will come as no surprise to any good parent or grandparent: Babies need to be read to, sung to, cuddled and played with from the day they are born.

Now we know why. The brain isn't complete at birth. It governs breathing and heartbeats, but the finer points — eyesight, hearing, language, emotions — are a mass of potential.

"At the time a baby is born, the brain is remarkably immature," said Dr. Wil Blechman, a Miami doctor who is now a consultant to the state. "Some of the cells — the neurons, the actual brain cells — are still moving into their proper positions. And they still have to hook up."

It works like this: Neurons are the basic brain cells. The gap between them is a synapse. They connect when an axon at the end of one cell fires chemicals into a dendrite on the other.

The axons and dendrites grow instantly as they are needed in a child's blossoming brain, mapping neural pathways as the baby responds to sight, sound, touch and play.

One child's brain may be mapped for English, another for Chinese, depending on what the baby hears in the first six months. One brain may develop a capacity for joy and another be programmed for fear, depending on the baby's home life.

"You will literally have a

A single cell may connect with at least 15,000 other cells. By 8 months, a baby's brain has 1,000-trillion such connections.

He will keep the pathways he uses continually; the others will wither. For instance, by age 1, a baby's brain will no longer recognize sounds that are not in its native language. But first, the brain tries out everything, making a child's brain busier than an adult's.

"Parents might get a little frustrated reading *Good Night, Moon* for the 40th time, but when that child is pointing at that mouse over and over again, they're learning," said Michael Levine of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which promotes early childhood research. His kids are 9, 6 and 2.

The brain opens windows of opportunity, during which it must be wired or the chance is lost. The length of time varies.

For example, if a child is born with cataracts that aren't removed until age 2, he will never be able to see, even through a normal eye. The brain is blind, the visual connections never established.

A child with chronic ear infections the first year may miss out on learning certain sounds, which could lead to speech problems later.

Scientists at Baylor College of Medicine found that children who aren't played with and touched develop brains 20 to 30 percent smaller than normal. Even rats develop more complex brains if they are given toys, compared to rats in plain cages.

Some problems can be remediated, but that is expensive and difficult. This helps explain why the gains made from early childhood programs such as Head Start, aimed at 3- and 4-year-olds, often fade over time. The programs start too late. The children's brains are already wired.

"It's a little frightening to me, this brain research," said Susan Muenchow, director of the Florida Children's Forum. "It's an enormous responsibility to have a child, and I'm not sure that many of us have realized quite what an awesome responsibility it is."

But alarming parents is exactly what First Lady Hillary Clinton said she hopes to avoid.

"One of my greatest fears about this research concerning the brain is that parents who are doing their best to raise children, often under difficult circumstances, will feel even more guilt and anxiety because they aren't sure they are

doing everything that the research asks them to do," she said.

Speaking this month to the Society for Research in Child Development, Mrs. Clinton said one man she knows read a magazine article about the way synapses develop in young children and vowed to read two books to his little boy every night. It was awful.

"He raced through the material without ever giving the child a chance to look at the pictures or ask questions about the story," she said. "And he couldn't understand why his son was not enjoying this experience at all."

Parents can relax a little. Not everything in the brain is set by age 3. A child's values develop until age 10 or so, governing the way she will relate to people or control her emotions. The frontal lobes, the seat of understanding, develop until at least 16. And new learning is always possible, as retirees know.

So Mom occasionally can skip a bedtime story. It's the child's repeated experience that lodges permanently in the brain.

That makes the consequences of abuse and neglect all the more tragic. Behavioral scientists have known for a long time that abuse leaves psychological scars. Now research shows an abused child's brain is literally warped.

"This really has implications when we hear about teenagers that are lashing out, killing people. Senseless, random killing may have its roots in the fact that the child's brain didn't develop properly," said Muenchow.

The policies

Brain research has been going on for years, but it reached critical mass in 1994 when the Carnegie Corp. of New York compiled various studies and produced a landmark report called *Starting Points*.

Carnegie combined scientific findings with some disheartening demographics. The years between the hospital nursery and preschool are the most crucial for children, the report showed, and too many are at risk.

■ One-quarter of families with children under 3 live in poverty.

■ Nearly a quarter of all pregnant women in America receive no prenatal care.

■ Half of all mothers return to the work force within a year of a baby's birth, and studies show only 12 to 14 percent of children are in day care that promotes their growth and learning. At least as many are in harmful settings.

■ More than 5-million children under 3 are in the care of other adults while their parents work.

Almost half of America's children can expect their parents to divorce. One-quarter live in single-parent homes.

■ One in three victims of physical abuse is a baby younger than one year.

■ Only half of infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.

■ No one is suggesting that mothers leave the work force and go home to the kids. The government, in fact, is sending welfare mothers into jobs and promising to pay for day care.

So day care is key, and brain research underscores the need to improve it, said Gail Robertson, executive director of the Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes.

"Now we have a lot of new information about (children's) development, particularly in their first three years," said Robertson. "We know more about the windows of opportunity and more about the importance of the adult-child interaction and how important it is for those caregivers to be trained and educated in early child development."

Florida has higher day-care standards than many states. A recent study by the Families and Work Institute in New York found the changes in children's development "extremely impressive" since Florida increased the ratio of day-care staff to children.

The number of hours a child under 3 spends in day care almost doesn't matter, as long as the quality is good, according to a study this month from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. If the teachers interact and respond to the child, the child's language and cognitive skills will develop just as well as those of the children who stayed home with a parent.

Eventually, day care for infants and toddlers may be looked upon as the start of school.

"From an investment perspective, if we think of education beginning with kindergarten, we're starting much too late," said Dorothy Routh, director of the Center for Educational Enhancement and Development at FSU.

"The other irony of this," said Jack Levine of the Florida Center for Children and Youth, "is that one-third of education dollars are remedial, trying to patch up the problems that could have and should have been averted with a better neonatal and early childhood experience."

Chiles has always argued that money spent on the youngest children will save money later on special education, welfare and prisons.

"It is so hopeful," Chiles said of the new findings. "It hasn't been long we had the argument whether it's environment or whether it's genetic. Good scientists came down on the side that this is all genetics, you can't do anything with these kids, they're not going to make it."

"Now you see literally, thank goodness, almost regardless of what your parents were, you get a shot," he said. "When you come in, you've got 1,000-trillion (synapses), just like anybody else does. What that says, if you want to build a community, build a neighborhood, you take care of your kids."

LEVEL 2 - 4 OF 54 STORIES

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April 18, 1997, Friday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: FEATURES; Pg. 05D

LENGTH: 525 words

HEADLINE: Singing, talking to new baby aids development, experts say

BYLINE: Julia Malone; WASHINGTON BUREAU

BODY:

Washington ---Parents should sing and talk to even the youngest infants, because the verbal stimulation is crucial to how well a child develops thinking and language skills later, a panel of experts urged Thursday at the White House.

"At first glance, it may seem odd to hold a conference here at the White House devoted to talking about baby talk," first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said as she and President Clinton opened the conference on early childhood development. "But that discussion has never been more important."

Mrs. Clinton said experts have confirmed what many parents have long felt ---that "the song a father sings to his child in the morning, or a story that a mother reads to her child before bed, help lay the foundation for a child's life and, in turn, for our nation's future."

The president added that new information confirming the impact of early child-rearing practices is "absolutely stunning." He announced a modest federal effort, a request that the Department of Defense, whose extensive child care system has been praised by experts, offer its expertise to improve civilian child care centers.

Mrs. Clinton, who returned to her law practice several months after having her only child, Chelsea, said it is time to confront directly the question of whether it's better for a mother to stay at home.

"Some people argue that what the research really tells us is that women with very young children should not work outside the home, period," she said.

Dr. Deborah Phillips, a child care expert with the National Research Council, responded that families "need choices." Studies show that "children can thrive from high quality child care," she said.

The panel of experts flanking the Clintons painted a dark picture of the state of childhood in America.

"Our nation's infants and children are in trouble," said Dr. David A. Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corp. of New York. He cited high infant mortality, low-birthweight babies, and a much higher percentage of children born to adolescent mothers than in other industrialized countries.



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Even so, the conference focused on children's potential, based on recent research on the first few months of a child's life.

Babies are smarter, more curious and more eager than earlier believed, said Dr. Donald J. Cohen, director of the Yale Child Study Center. "The minds of infants are active from the time that they are born," he said, adding that they remember incidents from an early age and lay down patterns that will determine their future paths.

A survey of more than 1,000 parents released at the conference indicated that many parents did not realize how much their babies were taking in. The poll found that 73 percent said they did not believe a baby could communicate much until learning to speak a few words.

Speech specialist Dr. Patricia K. Kuhl of the University of Washington provided academic backing for holding your baby and cooing softly in gibberish. Babies respond to "mother-ese" and "parent-ese," whose melodic sounds actually provide a tutorial in the sounds that make up language.

"They are listening," she said.

GRAPHIC: Chart: TAKING THOSE FIRST STEPS

Dr. William Staso, an expert in neurological development, suggests that different kinds of stimulation should be emphasized at different ages. At all stages, parental interaction and a conversational dialogue with the child are important. Here are some examples:

FIRST MONTH: A low level of stimulation reduces stress and increases the infant's wakefulness and alertness. The brain essentially shuts down the system when there is overstimulation from competing sources. When talking to an infant, for example, filter out distracting noises, like a radio.

MONTHS 1 TO 3: The brain starts to discriminate among acoustic patterns of language, like intonation, lilt and pitch. Speaking to the infant, especially in an animated voice, aids this process.

MONTHS 3 TO 5: Infants rely primarily on vision to acquire information about the world. Make available increasingly complex designs that correspond to real objects in the baby's environment; motion also attracts attention. A large picture of a fork, moved across the field of vision, would offer more stimulation than just an actual fork.

MONTHS 6 TO 7: Infants become alert to relationships such as cause and effect, the location of objects and the function of objects. Demonstrate and talk about situations like how the turning of a doorknob leads to the opening of a door.

MONTHS 7 TO 8: The brain is oriented to make associations between sounds and some meaningful activity or object. For example, parents can emphasize in conversation that the sound of water running in the bathroom signals an impending bath, or that a doorbell means a visitor. **MONTHS 9 TO 12:** Learning adds up to a new level of awareness of the environment and increased interest in exploration; sensory and motor skills coordinate in a more mature fashion. This is the time to let the child turn on a faucet or a light switch, under supervision. ---New York Times

LOAD-DATE: April 19, 1997



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LEVEL 2 - 8 OF 54 STORIES

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April 18, 1997, Friday, 3 STAR Edition

SECTION: a; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 642 words

HEADLINE: Clintons highlight child development;
Conference promotes early interaction

BYLINE: NANCY MATHIS, Houston Chronicle Washington Bureau; Staff

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON - All the White House talk Thursday was baby talk.

President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted the all-day White House Conference on Early Childhood Development to highlight the importance of nurturing infants and toddlers.

"At first glance, it may seem odd to hold a conference here at the White House devoted to talking about baby talk," said Hillary Clinton, the driving force behind the seminar.

"But that discussion has never been more important, because science ... has now confirmed what many parents have instinctively known all along: that the song a father sings to his child in the morning or a story that a mother reads to her child before bed help lay the foundation for a child's life and, in turn, for our nation's future," she said.

The symposium, with experts in the child development field, was beamed to nearly 100 sites in 37 states to publicize to parents and child care workers the latest science on brain development of children and their learning habits.

New research indicates a critical time, from birth through age 3, in which nurturing is important to brain development. It also has found that the brain structure continues developing until age 15.

"No matter how young, a child does understand a gentle touch or a smile or a loving voice," Clinton said. "Babies understand more than we have understood about them. Now we can begin to close the gap and to make sure that all children in this country do have that chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given potential."



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The Houston Chronicle, April 18, 1997

Hillary Clinton said she hoped the seminar "will get across the revolutionary idea that the activities that are the easiest, cheapest and most fun to do with your child are also the best for his or her development: singing, playing games, reading, storytelling, just talking and listening. "

Experts maintain that such activities are crucial in the early months of a baby's life.

"When we speak to our children something is happening. We are bringing about changes in the brain that will allow them to participate in the communications game," said Patricia Kuhl, director of the University of Washington's speech and hearing sciences department. "Infants are born to learn. Our role is to be good partners in this learning process. "

But the president and first lady also heard experts criticize the White House's embrace of the new welfare reform law.

The law requires welfare recipients, mostly mothers, to go to work within two years of receiving benefits and places a lifetime cap of five years on benefits. Critics contend it will push more children into poverty.

Dr. Terry Brazelton of Harvard Medical School, told the president, "In welfare reform, we turned the wrong way. We should have looked at what we were going to do with children before we pushed women out into the workplace. "

The president, who opened the session, said the welfare reform bill will give states a chance to put extra funds into child care. He said the new law "gives all of you who care about child care a year or two to make strenuous efforts, state by state, to create a more comprehensive, quality system of child care than we have ever had before. "

Clinton said his administration also wants to expand health care coverage to children who are not now covered.

He said his budget would extend coverage to an additional 5 million children by the year 2000.

The president announced he was ordering the Defense Department to share information with states and corporations on how it operates its successful child care centers.

He also announced the Justice Department will begin a new initiative called Safe Start that will train police, prosecutors and others in child development so they can handle situations involving youngsters.

GRAPHIC: Photo: President Clinton pauses in the White House East Room on Thursday while presiding over a conference on childhood development.; Associated Press



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THE KANSAS CITY STAR

April 18, 1997 Friday METROPOLITAN EDITION

SECTION: METROPOLITAN; Pg. C3

LENGTH: 247 words

HEADLINE: Clinton wants greater effort on child care.

BYLINE: DONALD BRADLEY, Staff Writer

BODY:

Saying that new scientific research has made a child's brain the "new frontier," President Clinton on Thursday renewed his call for a greater public investment in early childhood development.

The research runs contrary to old notions about when a child is able to learn. Scientists now contend that infants as young as three weeks begin to hear voices, recognize faces and distinguish colors.

Each sight and sound sends millions of nerve cells scrambling to establish a "brain's circuitry." The nurturing that a child receives during this time helps mold personality and lays the foundation for education.

The president made the comments during "The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What the Newest Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children."

The conference was linked by satellite from Washington to more than 100 sites around the country, including the University of Missouri-Kansas City where about 300 people had gathered.

Clinton used the event to direct the U.S. Navy, whose child-care system is highly praised, to collaborate with the civilian child-care industry to develop new strategies.

He also called for health coverage for all of America's children and for an expansion of Early Head Start, a program to address the developmental needs of children under age 4.

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THE KANSAS CITY STAR

April 18, 1997 Friday METROPOLITAN EDITION

SECTION: OPINION; Pg. C7; ASSISTANT EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR

LENGTH: 817 words

HEADLINE: Early childhood education has big payoffs

BYLINE: LAURA SCOTT, Assistant Editorial Page Editor

BODY:

Children's advocates have told us for years that a child's experiences in the first years of life are more critical to his ability to learn than what happens in the first grades.

Parents who have routinely enrolled their children in pre-school have understood this. Ditto for working parents who have searched - often with much difficulty - until they found quality child care.

Even if it cost them more, they wanted the enrichment and age-appropriate learning found in those centers and family homes that offer quality programs.

But the political leaders who determine the policies of teacher certification, licensure, health and safety requirements, curriculum, and who appropriate the financial support for child care programs have been slow at getting the connection between child care and learning. Missouri, for example still does not require unlicensed child care centers to have any curriculum at all.

Even the great increase in working mothers that has occurred in the last two decades has not brought a corresponding increase in the number of or quality of child care slots. And, while middle-class parents have had extremely limited choices for child care, the working poor largely has had no choices at all.

Most belatedly, attitudes about child care and the education of pre-schoolers are finally beginning to change. National news articles are reporting on the capacity of the brain to learn in the earliest years of life. President Clinton hosted this week a White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning.

Ironically, welfare reform has spawned much of this critical new look at the state of early childhood programs. More and more people are realizing that society has to answer not only the question of what to do with the children of people who are moving from welfare to work. It also has to find ways to make sure that care is good.

Missouri has been a leader (Yes! Missouri!) in emphasizing the



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THE KANSAS CITY STAR, April 18, 1997, Friday

importance of early childhood education reform, thanks largely to Gov. Mel Carnahan and advocacy by pro-child organizations throughout the state, particularly in Kansas City.

Carnahan wisely has recognized the importance of the enrichment experiences of first years of a child's life as they affect learning in later years.

The governor's latest initiative in this regard calls for the partnership of public schools with child care providers to create positive learning experiences for children before they enter elementary school. He also has created a state commission on early childhood education.

Before naysayers try to dismiss these ideas as liberal thinking of Democratic leaders Clinton and Carnahan, it might be well to remember that Missouri led the nation in one other farsighted approach to early childhood education. That program was Parents as Teachers, widely recognized and heralded for the impact that it has on children in their earliest months and years. And the governor who pushed that is a Republican, Kit Bond, now a U.S. senator still known for his work in this area.

Carnahan's proposal to mesh good child care with school-based programs is likely to succeed on a pilot basis because two top-notch administrators, Gary Stangler with the Department of Social Services and Robert Bartman with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are responsible for implementing it.

For this good idea to go beyond the pilot stage, it may take some convincing of policymakers in the Legislature as well as educators.

On-site child care has had slow acceptance by school administrators who have believed that early childhood education is not their job.

They could not appreciate the important link between good, age-appropriate pre-school experiences and the academic achievements of students down the road.

A debate still rages today within the education community as to who should teach the youngest children - people who are trained as teachers of elementary-age children or people who are trained as early childhood educators. The latter is the most obvious choice because of their special training in working with children of the youngest ages.

But this is undoubtedly one of the issues that will have to be resolved more than once as early childhood education takes center stage in the debate over how to improve student performance. The leadership example set by Missouri on this issue should be emulated at every turn.

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St. Petersburg Times

April 18, 1997, Friday, 0 South Pinellas Edition

SECTION: NATIONAL; Pg. 11A

LENGTH: 494 words

HEADLINE: Parents: We're exhausted, worried, but love our kids

BYLINE: ELLEN DEBENPORT

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Much as they love their children, American parents are exhausted, and they worry every day that they are not spending enough time with their kids, a new study shows.

Parents also know that a child's early years are crucial, but they are confused about what to do, especially with a child's emotional development as opposed to the mental and physical growth.

The poll was released Thursday by a Washington group called Zero to Three, which focuses on **early childhood**, in conjunction with a White House **conference** on infant brain development.

At the White House, researchers presented evidence to first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton about the profound importance of a baby's experience from birth to age 3 as its brain is being wired for life.

Ninety-five percent of parents know that babies begin learning the moment they are born, according to the Zero to Three poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research Associates with 1,022 parents nationwide.

But there are gaps in their knowledge.

+ Eighty-seven percent said the more stimulation a baby receives, the better. Not necessarily. It should be geared to the baby's development, interests and mood.

+ Half the parents thought the more caregivers a child had before age 3, the better the child would adapt. Wrong again. The child grieves each change and may have trouble forming new relationships.

+ About one-quarter of parents thought a baby's intelligence level is probably fixed at birth. In fact, the parents' interaction makes a crucial difference.



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St. Petersburg Times, April 18, 1997

+ One-third of the parents polled didn't know that babies younger than 6 months can get depressed.

Most parents think they are doing a good job, but half said they end each day wishing they had spent more time with the children.

They do adore the kids. The poll shows 91 percent of new parents are happier than ever before. But they also report feeling stressed and worn out (56 percent), afraid of doing something wrong (52 percent), afraid of not being a good parent (47 percent) and unsure what to do a lot of the time (44 percent).

The guilt runs especially high among working mothers, who are most likely to say they aren't spending enough time with the kids.

Whether by choice or economic necessity, 40 percent of the mothers of young children work full time, 19 percent work part time and another 8 percent are planning to return to work within six months, the poll showed.

Furthermore, 60 percent of all children under 3 are cared for regularly by someone other than their parents.

A second report released Thursday noted that 24 percent of U.S. children under 3 live in poverty.

The National Center for Children in Poverty said growing up poor means the children are at risk for poor nutrition, environmental toxins, depressed mothers who neglect them, trauma and abuse, low-quality child care and substance abuse. Any of those factors could affect brain development.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Capital Times

April 17, 1997, Thursday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: Local/State, Pg. 3A

LENGTH: 413 words

HEADLINE: KOHL SEEKS BIG GRANT FOR EARLY EDUCATION

BYLINE: By Jill Braverman The Capital Times/Medill News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

As part of a nationwide effort to enhance children's development and education between birth and age 3, U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl has announced a \$ 1 billion proposal to help states fund innovative early education programs.

"Unfortunately, the federal commitment to early education has not caught up with our understanding of how important the first three years of life are," the Wisconsin Democrat said Wednesday. "Early education receives fewer resources, (less) teacher training, salary and even respect than the rest of the education system."

Kohl's proposal is a block grant of about \$ 1 billion over five years. The money would go to states to fund innovative programs to expand education and care for newborns to 3-year-olds. The programs would not duplicate or compete with the Head Start program, which provides the majority of its funds to disadvantaged 4- and 5-year-olds.

Movie actor and director Rob Reiner testified before a Senate education subcommittee in support of Kohl's proposal. The proposal came as part of a campaign launched this week by Reiner and others to raise awareness about the importance of a child's first three years of development.

"With the startling new research in brain development, science now clearly tells us that what a child is physically, emotionally and intellectually exposed to from the prenatal period through age 3 has a far-reaching effect on how a child's brain organizes itself," said Reiner, chairman of the "I Am Your Child" campaign.

"And since we now know that 90 percent of a person's brain growth and development occurs in the first three years, how a child's brain organizes itself in those critical years will have a profound impact on what kind of adult he or she will turn out to be."

As part of the "I Am Your Child" campaign, President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will host a White House conference on early childhood development Thursday.



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Capital Times, April 17, 1997

In addition to his block grant proposal, Kohl has authored the Child Care Infrastructure Act of 1997, a bill that would provide tax incentives to businesses that invest in quality child care options for their employees.

The incentives include tax breaks on costs related to establishing onsite centers, investing in licensed community centers and creating child care resource and referral services. There also would be tax incentives for employers to invest in education and training programs for child care workers.

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The Columbus Dispatch

April 17, 1997, Thursday

SECTION: NEWS LOCAL & NATIONAL, Pg. 8A

LENGTH: 503 words

HEADLINE: VOINOVICH SPEAKS OUT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT, CLEAN AIR

BYLINE: Jonathan Riskind, Dispatch Washington Bureau

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Tackling two diverse topics, Gov. George V. Voinovich advocated early childhood development and blasted proposed tougher clean air standards in a quick trip to Washington yesterday.

Voinovich said it's easy to measure the benefits of boosting a child's emotional and intellectual development during the first three years of life.

But that isn't the case when it comes to measuring the health benefits of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed clean air standards, he said.

In his role as vice chairman of the National Governors Association, Voinovich appeared at a news conference and then testified before a Senate subcommittee to publicize the "I Am Your Child Campaign."

The campaign is a national public awareness and education initiative spearheaded by movie producer-director Rob Reiner. The NGA and a host of corporate sponsors and foundations have joined in the effort, which includes an ABC-TV special on April 28 and participation in today's White House Conference on Early Childhood Development.

The campaign's theme focuses on the critical importance of the first three years of life in determining whether a child becomes an emotionally stable and intellectually fulfilled adult. Stimuli to an infant's brain are crucial in shaping those outcomes, scientists say.

The campaign was first unveiled at the recent NGA annual meeting here. Next year Voinovich, as NGA's chairman, will host a national conference to highlight various early childhood programs in different states.

"If we do our job right, the result will be children who are happier and healthier, ready for school and better prepared to lead productive lives," Voinovich said.

The governor later went before a House panel to reiterate his contention that proposed clean air standards would be an economic disaster for Ohio and other states.



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The Columbus Dispatch, April 17, 1997

There is no scientific proof that tougher standards would prove beneficial enough to warrant the costs, he told a House Government Reform and Oversight Committee subcommittee.

"I find it hard to believe that anyone in public service has the luxury of throwing billions of dollars at a problem without knowing if it is hitting the right target, yet that is exactly what the EPA is proposing," Voinovich said.

However, the governor came under fire from Northeastern lawmakers who said that Ohio and other Midwestern states are sending massive amounts of pollution their way because of the way airstreams flow.

Voinovich said in an interview after his testimony that Northeastern states are trying to punish Ohio and other Midwestern states for their success in both economic development and in complying with current pollution standards.

In a related development, Rep. David L. Hobson, R-Springfield, says the EPA has admitted there is a lack of consensus in the scientific community about the public health benefit of the proposal rules. Hobson questioned EPA Administrator Carol Browner Tuesday during a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing.

GRAPHIC: Photo, Associated Press, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton of Harvard University holds 6-day-old Barrett Moss Johnson at a hospital in Washington, D.C., as producer-director Rob Reiner looks on.

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The Record

April 17, 1997; THURSDAY; ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A07

LENGTH: 171 words

HEADLINE: DOCTORS TO GIVE BOOKS TO INFANTS AND TODDLERS

COLUMN: EDUCATION

SOURCE: Wire services

BYLINE:

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Parents: Expect "Green Eggs and Ham" to be prescribed on your baby's next visit to the pediatrician.

Under a national campaign announced Wednesday by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, pediatricians and hospitals have teamed up with book publishers to prescribe reading to infants and toddlers as part of standard pediatric care.

More than 250,000 books, such as the Dr. Seuss classic, have already been donated so that, instead of a lollipop from the doctor, young patients will be given a book to take home.

"Time spent sharing a favorite book with a child, even a newborn, strengthens the bond between a parent and child and prepares that child for reading, and literally helps a child's brain grow," Clinton said at a ceremony announcing the initiative.

It served as a kickoff for today's daylong White House Conference on Early Childhood, which the president and first lady were hosting to explore what the latest brain studies say about how very young children learn and grow.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: April 18, 1997



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The Times Union (Albany, NY)

April 17, 1997, Thursday, THREE STAR EDITION

SECTION: MAIN, Pg. A13

LENGTH: 651 words

HEADLINE: On education, Clintons need quick study

BYLINE: Suzanne Fields

BODY:

Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton are engaging in a one-two punch for education. It's a lot less risky than overhauling health care. Whether it will be more successful is not yet clear but at least it won't put 7 percent of our economy at risk of destruction.

On his Saturday radio broadcast, the President noted that being a parent was "the toughest job any person can have" (we can all agree on that) and he touted the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning, which begins today.

The conference, popularly referred to in Washington circles as the "White House Brainchild," will examine the current research into the ways infants learn, stressing that a mom's intimacy with her child in the first three years encourages brain development. Hillary's in charge and the First Lady will be an active participant. This is clearly her baby.

The First Lady devoted her newspaper column last week to discussing how quality day care -- the emphasis is on "quality" -- can produce the same quality 3-year-old as a mother at home can. Or so says the research. But the more time babies spend in day care, the weaker their bond with their mothers. The consequence of a weak mother-child bond cannot be measured on a standardized test, but it affects the way a child learns.

Herein lies the dilemma for the President and the First Lady as they embark on the trendiest part of their education policy initiative: early childhood education. Their liberal base demands the government organize more hands-on programs for youngsters, pouring funds into "quality" day care and Head Start (even though Head Start benefits disappear in the third grade.) These are the constituents the President enraged when he signed the welfare reform bill, which changed financial incentives to encourage women with young children to work outside the home.

Conservatives want tax incentives to encourage mothers to stay home with young children. They don't want mothers penalized by high taxes to pay for child care of others when the evidence shows educational and emotional benefits for the child with the stay-at-home mom.

The experts will argue about the diverse theories of early childhood



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development, and which of the theories should get the emphasis in policy -- whether behaviorist, cognitive, psychometric, developmental, neurological, cultural, environmental, linguistic, genetic or evolutionary. And that's the short list.

Early childhood education, of course, requires a diligent and disciplined follow-up for older children. In the highly respected Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) of 13-year-olds, American youngsters finished 28th in math -- not only behind Singapore, South Korea and Japan, the top three countries, but behind Czechoslovakia, France, Russia and Germany and nearly everyone else. In science our students did slightly better, coming in 17th, but far behind some countries that spend considerably less on education than we do.

Adding insult to ignorance, TIMSS explodes the myth of a correlation between excellence and the level of money spent on education. This explosion of myth contradicts (and enrages) the teachers' unions. The study concludes, albeit tentatively, that teaching methods even more than money determine quality education.

When the first couple visits an elementary school classroom in Washington, they tell the fable of the "Tortoise and the Hare," hoping to get the schoolchildren to understand that the perseverance of the slow but steadily moving tortoise can triumph over the lazy, faster hare.

"It's a lot like reading," says the First Lady. "If you do it slowly and carefully, and just keep at it, you can succeed, just like the tortoise did." But even Aesop is now cast in doubt. How the tortoise succeeds also depends on the mother (and father) as well as the teacher of that tortoise.

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The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)

April 17, 1997, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: LOCAL, Pg. B1

LENGTH: 1724 words

HEADLINE: THE TOOLS OF PARENTING;
THE HEALTHY FAMILIES PARTNERSHIP SEEKS TO HELP CHILDREN IN A SIMPLE BUT;
AMBITIOUS WAY - BY TEACHING THE ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES.

BYLINE: BY ELIZABETH SIMPSON, STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: HAMPTON

BODY:

Like many tales of triumph, this one begins with bad news. Hampton city officials noticed in the late '80s that city funds couldn't keep pace with the number of families needing help for things like health clinic visits and abuse complaints.

The community could have tried to fix the problems. Instead, they decided to cut off problems before they ever happened. A coalition of community members began a mission as ambitious as it was simple: Make sure all Hampton children are born healthy and enter school ready to learn. That's how the Hampton Family Resource Project - now called Healthy Families Partnership - was born in 1992. Thousands of Hampton parents have since reaped the benefits of the broad array of family services: free parenting classes that include day care and dinner; newsletters that begin arriving before a child is born and continue until the child graduates from high school; weekly home visits for families who might otherwise need help down the road; and libraries that give parents how-to help in the same area as children's books and toys. The services aren't just for at-risk kids and parents; they're for everybody. And now the rest of the country is about to find out about them, too. On April 28, the Hampton project will be featured in an ABC-TV one-hour documentary called "I Am Your Child." The show, produced by Rob Reiner and Michele Singer Reiner, will be hosted by Tom Hanks and also will feature such luminaries as Robin Williams, Rosie O'Donnell, President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton. The prime-time special is one piece of a national campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance of the early childhood years. The Hampton project will be featured as an example of how a community can mobilize resources to answer those needs. The I Am Your Child campaign, which was launched Wednesday in Washington, will also include a one-day conference today at the White House on early childhood development, a Newsweek Special Edition on the same topic, and a series of public service announcements and parent videos to emphasize the importance of a child's first three years of life. "Communities are realizing that we can't keep pouring money into treatment, that we have to put more money into prevention," said Johanna Schuchert, the director of Healthy Families Virginia, which is coordinating the establishment of new Healthy Families sites across the state. For the people who have worked on the Hampton project, the national recognition



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The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA), April 17, 1997

is sweet reward. "It's exciting, and overwhelming," said Debbie Russell, who was on the original task force and now directs Hampton's Healthy Families Partnership. The appeal of the Healthy Families approach, which was first used in Hawaii, is threefold, according to Russell. First, it involves the entire community, from social workers to health professionals to teachers to business leaders to parents themselves. Second, all parents have access to the network of services, no matter their income or need. And third, the approach doesn't come with the stigma that many social programs cast. "The strength of the program is that it includes parents from all walks of life," Russell said. The most intensive piece of the project comes in the form of home visits. Family support workers visit parents who might be at risk of needing family-related services. The workers give advice on prenatal care in weekly home visits starting when a woman learns she is pregnant. They continue to meet with the family each week after the child is born, up until the child is 1 year old. The visits are less frequent after that, but still continue until the child is 5. The family support workers discuss health issues for mother and child, nurturing activities, discipline techniques and games that will help young children be ready for school. On a sunny spring day last week, family support worker Tarsha Davis visited 25-year-old Laura Bradford, who has a house full of children. Six-year-old Chelsea was home from school sick with a virus. Brandon, 3, and Ashton, 17 months, were in search of toys and attention while the newest family member, 5-month-old Shelby, watched the chaos from her mother's lap. Davis pulled out a fuzzy fish, a rattling square and a plastic book that she lets Shelby explore with her tiny fingers and probe with her gums. Davis not only helps Shelby with developmental activities, but also talks with Bradford about whatever she wants, whether it be doctors' appointments, a new job or Ashton's first words. "It's been like having a good friend," Bradford said. "She's been there for me." While Bradford has had experience in mothering, many of the parents who get home visits are first-time parents just learning the ropes. Statistics show the visits make a difference in the health of both parent and child. For instance, an average of 92 percent of the children born to women in the home-visit program have been immunized, compared to the average Hampton rate of 48 percent. Among the teen mothers in the program, the repeat birth rate is 8 percent, far below the 36 percent repeat teen birth rate for the city of Hampton. And women who had the prenatal home visits had fewer pregnancy and birth complications than a control group of similar mothers. "Twenty years ago, every child born in Hampton had a nurse come out to visit them," said Teresa Woodard, director of the home visits. "This is a revival of the same kind of support." Hampton parents can also sign up for less intensive help. The project offers 40 parenting classes a year, on topics like nurturing newborns, disciplining middle-schoolers and raising teen-agers in troubled times. While many communities offer such classes, Hampton's courses go a step further. Class coordinators were not happy with the 30 percent to 40 percent retention rate of the parents who first enrolled in the classes in 1992, even though that's the national average. "We wanted to remove the barriers to going to the classes," Russell said. So they began offering free child care in the same building as the classes and also talked with various Hampton restaurant managers, who agreed to provide free dinners for the families that participated. That eliminated the hassle of getting to class and feeding the family at the same time. The retention rate soared to 72 percent. Cindy Johnson, a Hampton mother of a 13-month-old girl, took her first class five months ago, and is taking two more now. "They cover everything you could possibly want to know," she said. "They teach you what to do if your baby is colicky, how to look for day care, when you need to go to an emergency room if your child has a fever." Besides



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The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA), April 17, 1997

learning from the instructors, Johnson said the class discussions provide real-life experience from the large range of parents who attend. For Johnson, it's been like having an extended family in town to call on for child-rearing help. "There's so many people like us who are in the military and who go wherever they send you," she said. "If you don't have family nearby, this program can help you. It's great." Not all parents feel they can spare the time for a class. But there's still room for them in the Healthy Families Partnership. They can visit five different Young Family Centers in Hampton libraries, which have rooms set up so parents can browse through parenting manuals while their children play with toys and read board books. Or parents can receive the 14 editions of the Healthy Stages newsletter, which were written and developed by Sentara Health Systems and distributed free to parents by Riverside Hospital. The newsletters begin arriving in the mother's second trimester of pregnancy and arrive every three to six months up until the child's fifth birthday. "The more we read them, the more we learn," said Alesia Duncan, who along with her husband, Michael, are among the 4,000 Hampton families who receive the newsletters. This year the newsletters are being expanded to continue the parenting advice until the child graduates from high school. Parents also can receive the Healthy Family Bulletin, which lists activities for parents and children, every other month. The Healthy Families project is considered a success by Hampton city leaders, who have increased funding for it. The state has also continued to pitch in an annual \$ 150,000 grant. In 1995, Virginia legislators also set aside funding to establish four more Healthy Families sites, in Alexandria, Fairfax, Culpeper and Martinsville. And they committed \$ 625,000 more this year to set up 14 more sites, including one in Newport News and one in the South Hampton Roads region. So far, family resource centers have been set up in Norfolk and Virginia Beach libraries. Home visits will begin later this year. Child advocates across the country are also singing the praises of the Healthy Families approach, promoting it as a way to prevent birth complications and child abuse and to help children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. Cities in 240 localities in 37 different states are now setting up similar programs. "It would be a miracle if all communities could do this," said Johnson. "It works wonders."

GRAPHIC: BETH BERGMAN COLOR PHOTOS/The Virginian-Pilot;
Family support worker Tarsha Davis, right, visits Hampton resident Laura Bradford and three of her four children, from left, Ashton, 17 months; Shelby, 5 months; and 6-year-old Chelsea. Home visits by workers like Davis are a key element of the Healthy Families Partnership.;
Graphic;
INFORMATION

For more information about the Healthy Families program being set up in South Hampton Roads, call 622-7017, ext. 136 or 125.

For information about the Hampton Healthy Families Partnership, call 727-1882.

For more information about the I Am Your Child campaign, check the following web site: <http://www.iamyourchild.org>.



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The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA), April 17, 1997

The ABC-TV special ''I Am Your Child'' will air at 8 p.m. on April 28.

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LEVEL 2 - 36 OF 54 STORIES

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The Montgomery Advertiser

April 16, 1997, Wednesday

SECTION: Op Ed; Pg. 9A

LENGTH: 961 words

HEADLINE: NOURISHMENT FOR YOUNG BRAINS CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

BYLINE: By JOAN BECK

BODY:

It's only a one-day conference tomorrow, limited to the number of influential people who can be packed into the White House's East Room. But the idea President and Hillary Clinton are plugging is one of the most exciting of the century, its implications are staggering and its promise is mind-boggling.

The title is almost as long as a press release: **The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children.**

It's time the idea got a strong presidential push, especially from a chief executive who wants to be called "The Education President" and a first lady who has found a niche as an advocate for kids.

Research accumulating for more than three decades now shows beyond doubt that the quality and quantity of early mental stimulation -- opportunities for appropriate learning from birth on -- help determine how capable a child's brain will be for life.

Learning stimulation in the first few years of life actually influences the physical make-up of the brain, how the neurons will interconnect, how well the brain will "think," how "smart" the child will be. Educational opportunities later on in life do not affect the brain in the same way or have such an important impact

AN ENVIRONMENT RICH in appropriate opportunities to learn can raise a child's potential IQ by 20 to 30 points (by the inexact measures of intelligence available) because of its impact on the development of the brain. Mental malnourishment in the first years of life can lower potential IQ permanently, beyond what even the best schooling can compensate for completely later on.

Schooling can help a child use the brain he has effectively, give him vast amounts of information and motivate him to learn. But only in the early years of life can mental stimulation actually change the brain to make it a more effective organ of thinking.

Now, the challenge is to identify the kinds of learning experiences that nourish young children's brains best and how they can be made available to all our kids. Some participants in the White House conference will talk about model



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programs being developed in several communities around the country.

Despite the excitement and promise of neurological research on brain development, early learning ideas have been slow to become part of mainstream child care and education.

Many leaders in the growing field of early childhood education are still too tradition-bound to appreciate the potential of the new neurological research and misunderstand early learning as imposing formal and inappropriate lessons on restless youngsters. Their programs concentrate on emotional development, social behavior and nutrition -- necessary, of course. But parents, politicians and donors may be misled into assuming they provide more neurologically based mental stimulation than they actually do.

MORE THAN HALF of all mothers with young children now hold jobs outside the home, limiting the time and energy they can devote to their youngsters. Using early learning strategies can make their time together happier, more beneficial to the children and more rewarding for the parents.

Much of what good parents do by instinct or because it makes their children happy provides good nourishment for their brains. Talking to a baby, responding to his efforts to communicate by body language or by babbling, creating safe spaces at home where he can explore freely, just giving him something new to see or do when he fusses out of boredom all help the brain to grow.

Parents need more ideas about brain-nourishing activities. They need more time and more flexibility in their jobs so their children don't have to come in second so often. Most of all, they need a new understanding and appreciation of how much they can contribute not only to their youngsters' physical and emotional well-being but to their growing intelligence.

Public school systems generally ignore children younger than age 5 and are too hard-pressed financially to explore the possibilities of reach-out programs. Day-care centers often talk about their learning programs but most provide traditional nursery school fare and lack enough trained teachers to give all of their charges optimal, individual mental nourishment.

Many of the special programs set up to give early learning help to high-risk youngsters in poor areas have had only minimal success. They usually use traditional day-care models and give priority to youngsters' urgent physical and emotional needs.

This is what happens in many Head Start programs, which generally offer too little, too late, in the way of mental nourishment. Early Head Start, begun in 1994, is intended to help children from birth to age 3 in low income areas, but it is still too small and too new for good evaluation.

The promises of early learning based on new neurological research are too exciting to brush over lightly or to push aside after the White House conference in the rush of other political matters. It isn't clear yet, however, how best to make the advantages of these new findings available to all our children, especially those in dysfunctional families and those at risk of eventual school failure.

THAT'S WHERE THE president and first lady could really make a difference. By



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The Montgomery Advertiser, April 16, 1997

sticking with this idea for the rest of his term. By using whatever funding Clinton can bully out of Congress to start and expand model programs. By pestering Head Start administrators to upgrade standard day-care fare with special brain-nourishing components. By generating the national sustained excitement that the promise of the new research deserves.

The idea could do a lot for the Clintons -- as well as for the nation's kids.

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LEVEL 2 - 43 OF 54 STORIES

Copyright 1997 The News and Observer
The News and Observer (Raleigh, NC)

April 15, 1997 Tuesday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A3

LENGTH: 612 words

HEADLINE: Proposals encouraging, day-care operators say

BYLINE: Tim Simmons, Staff Writer

BODY:

For parents who wonder about the education of their child's day-care workers or whether their center has a history of problems, state officials have a suggestion: Post details about staff education and results of past inspections on the wall of every day-care center in North Carolina.

Such a public rating system was among dozens of changes discussed by more than 100 day-care owners, directors and others in the field who gathered Monday to discuss a bill to improve day-care centers. The bill, which is backed by Gov. Jim Hunt, would require more education and training of workers, streamlining inspections, and a rating system that makes it easier for parents to judge a center's quality.

Most found the new proposals encouraging.

"This is such an important time in a child's life, we can't afford not to improve our standards," said Susan Cron, who runs Pleasant Day Preschool in Raleigh.

Hunt called for the legislation in response to stories in The News & Observer that showed the importance of brain development during a child's first few years and how the state's low standards often fail children during that critical time.

Studies show that better educated workers and informed parents improve the quality of care.

"We believe, and Governor Hunt believes, the time is definitely right to make these changes," said Stephanie Fanjul, director of the state Division of Child Development.

After being ignored for years, those who work with young children have suddenly found themselves at the center of a national debate over childhood development.

This week, Hunt will take part in a forum in Raleigh designed to highlight recent findings in brain research. The White House will hold a day-long conference on early childhood development. A coalition of entertainers, corporate executives, foundation leaders, politicians and doctors also is scheduled to launch a national public awareness campaign Wednesday.



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The News and Observer (Raleigh, NC) April 15, 1997 Tuesday,

Against that backdrop, supporters of the day-care bill hope it will be easier to demand more training of day-care workers while having inspectors focus on what divides quality and mediocre facilities.

Under the proposed changes, poor centers would be visited more often. The classes that would count toward continuing education would be limited to specific areas, such as first aid or child development. Nearly any class is now allowed under the state's definition of continuing education. Some workers have claimed credit for classes where they learn to make an Easter hat out of a paper plate, Fanjul said.

Directors and lead teachers also would have to complete certificate programs. About half of the state's lead teachers and directors now do not meet the standards.

The state would pay for the additional training, and other changes required by the bill, through Smart Start money, Fanjul said.

The bill would raise the minimum age of home day-care providers from 18 to 21 and require a high school diploma of new family day-care operators by Jan. 1, 1998.

The bill does not address lowering child-to-adult ratios at day-care centers, which is considered essential for quality care. Hunt has promised to address that issue before he leaves office.

Day-care providers said that the state also must help them reduce turnover by improving workers' pay. The average day-care worker in North Carolina makes \$ 5.25 an hour and stays on the job about seven months. Even in centers where educated workers are valued and ratios are low, it's tough to compete against other businesses.

"I lost a worker recently to an area dry-cleaning shop because they paid her \$ 1 an hour more," Cron said. "It's something we just have to address."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 15, 1997



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LEVEL 2 - 50 OF 54 STORIES

Copyright 1997 Star Tribune
Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

April 15, 1997, Metro Edition.

SECTION: Marketplace; Pg. 1D

LENGTH: 278 words

HEADLINE: FYI;
Mandated maternity leave 'unfeasible'

BODY:

Hillary Rodham Clinton said Monday she would support government-required maternity leave for private companies' employees "if it were feasible," but political and economic forces make it unrealistic.

She met with reporters to preview Thursday's presidential conference on early childhood development. Armed with cutting-edge studies about how the brain blossoms in a child's first three years, the First Lady hopes the conference will educate parents about the long-lasting importance of intimacy with newborns.

Singing to them, reading to them, playing with them and talking to them are scientifically proven ways to increase the development of children's brains, she said.

"We are the result of both nature and nurture," the First Lady said.

Though many companies offer paid maternity leave, there is no government requirement.

Asked why she does not advocate a paid maternity leave requirement, the First Lady said, "I think it's because people believe that in our current political climate . . . that it's not realistic." She noted that it took eight years to pass family medical leave legislation.

- Associated Press

Less is more

"Fill it up" apparently is not the motto of fine wine drinkers. Wine Spectator magazine polled visitors to its Web site found that a pet peeve among the 1,364 respondents was wine stewards or waiters filling a glass too full. Oenophiles say they want room to swirl the wine and sniff it.

- Associated Press



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Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN), April 15, 1997

Today

- Commerce Department releases the Consumer Price Index for March. For details on the price figures from NewsWatch call 673-9050 and enter 1210.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 16, 1997



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FAMILY AND CHILDREN BEAT

Parents Need to Learn That They Can Affect Baby's IQ

Optional trim at 1,250 words

By BETH FRERKING

c.1997 Newhouse News Service

WASHINGTON — Babies' brains are all the rage. They've made magazine covers, launched a star-studded public campaign for kids, complete with an upcoming prime-time television special, and spawned a White House conference on brain development during a child's early years.

At the conference, neuroscientists will appear alongside child development specialists to explain why it is so important that a parent talk and sing to, touch and caress a baby — why a hug, to a baby's growing brain, is more than just a hug. They have discovered that the wiring of a developing brain is literally driven by what a baby sees, hears, touches, smells and tastes.

“Rich experiences, in other words, really do produce rich brains,” Time magazine wrote in its Feb. 3 cover story on babies' brains.

But as a new poll shows, not all parents understand how much they can influence a child's intellectual, social and emotional development. And, as the White House conference on early childhood development opens this Thursday, children's advocates say they have a unique opportunity to unite science with the everyday tasks of parenting and with public policy that affects children, from welfare reform to the quality of child care.

Researchers and advocates recognize that they walk a fine line between encouraging parents and scaring them when they describe the profound effects that good (and bad) parenting can have on a child's developing brain, especially during the critical first three years of life.

And they say that if they are to use these scientific discoveries as a way to help parents — rather than to demoralize them over opportunities lost — they must proceed gingerly.

A poll of 1,000 parents to be released this week in conjunction with the White House seminar found that parents are confused about how much they can shape a baby's developing brain. In the poll sponsored by Zero to Three, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, fully a quarter of parents believed that a baby's level of intelligence cannot be increased or decreased by how parents interact with the baby.

Scientific research has shown that intelligence is not fixed, said Lynette Ciervo, a spokeswoman for Zero to Three, a private, non-profit research, education and training center on early childhood development. Parents' involvement can strengthen a child's ability to solve problems, increase curiosity and bolster confidence in their ability to learn, she said.

Yet, in response to another question in the survey, some parents seemed to contradict themselves: 85 percent said they believe that babies who are stimulated through reading, playing and touching will develop more fully than those who don't receive the appropriate stimulation.

“Our report points out that there's a lot of confusion,” Ciervo said.

There's also a lot of guilt. In focus groups that accompanied the Zero to Three poll, parents were sensitive about child care issues, especially suggestions that the number of caregivers could affect development.

Thus, because parents tend to disregard advice that sounds preachy or prescriptive, researchers say they need to communicate findings about brain development in an encouraging and positive tone.

Even first lady Hillary Clinton has cautioned vigilance. “One of my great fears, for example, about this research concerning the brain is that parents who are doing their best to raise children, often under difficult circumstances, will feel even more guilt and anxiety because they aren't sure if they are doing everything that the research should ask them to do,” she said recently.

The trick, child development experts say, lies in translating complex findings into lay terms, and in using them to enhance what many parents already

do naturally.

Matthew Melmed, director of Zero to Three, believes it is critical to affirm good parenting in the same way Dr. Benjamin Spock did in his first book, when he advised parents to trust themselves, because they knew more than they thought they did.

"I think that message can be updated for the '90s to add that there's so much more we've learned that you can take advantage of," Melmed said. "The reality is, most parents do it well enough."

Yet the research on children's brain development can help reinforce parenting instruction for those who need help most. In Missouri, for example, the Parents as Teachers National Center has joined with scientists and doctors from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis to link child development research with parenting practices.

Parent trainers will attend seminars by the medical team to learn how a developing brain is helped or hindered by various forms of stimulation. Trainers then will take that information to the classroom, explaining to parents how some parenting techniques actually aid brain development.

Consider teen-age parents, most of whom know little about child development. Many view a newborn much like a baby doll, a love object to kiss and cuddle, said Mildred Winter, director of the Parents as Teachers center. Six months later, when the baby grabs at her face and hair, the young mother may become irritated and distant, Winter said.

"Sometimes we find teen parents resist, because it's very important to them how they look, and they don't want their hair messed up, so they don't pick up the baby," Winter said.

What is happening, of course, is that the baby is trying to learn by reaching out, touching and seeing her mother's face at close range. A mother who responds by smiling, talking, cuddling and mimicking expressions is essentially speaking the baby's language.

"When the baby begins reaching out and learning through all her senses, it's part of the attachment process," Winter said. "If we can show how critical it is to a child's development, then we think (the teen mothers) are going to pay attention to that" rather than to preach-don't-teach methods that omit the science behind effective parenting.

Winter said they will continue to teach the same parenting skills they have always taught. "But the connection we can make with brain development _ which seems to have captured the nation's attention _ gives us a new means of making our message more compelling."

Dr. Bruce Perry, a psychiatrist at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston who has done groundbreaking research on the physiological effects of violence on children, praised the Parents As Teachers project. "That is absolutely the correct way to proceed," he said. "If we educate them about the way the brain develops, they will naturally know why it's appropriate to pick up that child."

Perry believes that neuroscientists have been their own worst enemies in circulating their discoveries, in part because they speak their own language.

"We're literally drowning in factoids," Perry said, but there's no connection or rational system of linking all the parts, he said.

This fails public policymakers as much as it fails parents, he said. If elected officials understood how early the brain develops, they might better understand the importance of quality child care and early nutrition programs, he said.

(OPTIONAL TRIM FOLLOWS)

Children's advocates hope that the day-long White House conference, which

will be broadcast to about 80 sites in 30 states, will help raise public awareness. They're also depending on a media campaign chaired by actor-director Rob Reiner, an effort that will include public service announcements and a television special on April 28 starring Tom Hanks.

Perry, part of the ``I Am Your Child'' campaign spearheaded by Reiner, said issues of early childhood development are not embedded in the public lexicon in

the way that, say, smoking risks have been widely acknowledged. Too often, he said, children's issues only gain attention through splashy annual events such as the Stand for Children march or the release of annual child health indices.

Those come and they go, often with little lasting effect. A recent private study of 177 top state legislators around the country found, for example, that only one was familiar with the annual ``Kids Count'' report on the status of children, a Bible of sorts within the national child advocacy community. And only a handful could name a single child advocacy organization in their state.

Rather, Perry, Reiner and others say that until information about early brain development is as ubiquitous as athletic shoe advertisements, the public may remain ignorant about how best to raise bright and stable children and, ultimately, a healthy and productive society.

``How many T-shirts would Nike sell if they had a one-hour commercial once a year?'' Perry asked. ``Not very many.''

RH END FRERKING



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**Op-Ed**

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All editorials and commentary from Sunday's Washington Post Outlook section.

White House Child's Play

By Jonathan Yardley

Monday, April 21 1997; Page D02
The Washington Post

At the risk of tiptoeing into a tulip bed strewn with land mines: Did you catch the latest episode in what is now commonly billed as the "feminization" of American politics? It took place last week in the White House, to which the psychotherapists-in-residence invited behaviorists, child-development specialists and other ne'er-do-wells for a top-level discussion of -- are you ready for this? -- "baby talk."

That is exactly what Hillary Rodham Clinton called it. "At first glance," she told the assembled worthies, "it may seem odd to hold a conference here at the White House devoted to talking about baby talk, but that discussion has never been more important." Thereupon she and her husband favored us with the latest in enlightened "scientific" opinion about the rearing of children, the gist of which your great-great-grandmother knew long before anyone had the brilliant idea of hyphenating "child" and "development."

Babies whose parents talk and sing to them are more likely to become bright, responsive children than babies whose parents do not. It's as simple as that, though the wordsmiths at the Families and Work Institute would have you believe it's as complicated as thermonuclear physics. The way they put it, in a report called "Rethinking the Brain" that was issued as part of last week's festivities, is: "The impact of the environment is dramatic and specific, not merely influencing the general direction of development, but actually affecting how the intricate circuitry of the brain is wired."

Maybe so. But "talk to your baby" is what it boils down to, which raises the question that seems to have occurred to no one: Is this really the proper business of the president of the United States? With all the other matters that rush in upon our grounded ship of state, is it necessary to add pop psychology to the White House agenda? Even granting that the nurture of the young is a matter of obvious individual and collective concern, is it in fact a matter that is usefully addressed by feel-good presidential rhetoric and photo-op White House conferences?

No doubt at this point someone will object that these qualms are raised by

one who obviously (not to mention odiously) believes in old-fashioned, "masculine" notions of presidential leadership; i.e., that the "proper" business of the presidency is launching preemptive air strikes against miniature principalities, selling off the Lincoln Bedroom to the highest bidder and kowtowing to political action committees. No way. These questions are asked not out of a yearning for the bad old days but out of a suspicion that the good new days toward which we now are being dragged may not turn out to be so good after all.

To claim that a political leadership that addresses itself to issues of domestic and psychological health has been "feminized" is, to put it mildly, not merely to put one's toe on a land mine but to make a generalization of highly dubious legitimacy. Yet there can be little doubt that the people who make it their business to tend the political landscape believe this to be the case. The people who orchestrated last year's political conventions -- most of them, as it happens, exceedingly cynical men -- broadcast them through rose-colored lenses because they believe that a "soft," feel-good approach to public issues is what women want. Ditto for all those equally cynical men who designed last year's television coverage of the Olympic Games, dominated as it was by "up close and personal" portraits of the athletes, especially those whose stories tended to produce tears of sympathy.

A modest amount was made of this phenomenon at the time, and clearly the lessons it allegedly taught were closely attended to by those who attempt to influence, and capitalize upon, American public opinion. What got precious little attention, though, was the body of assumptions on which it was based. These begin with the indisputable fact that there are now considerably more women than men in this country, and then venture off into rather less provable hypotheses about what this new majority expects from politics, mass communications and other vast enterprises previously run by, and for, men.

It's the old question: What do women want? Though politicians and the news media would have us believe that they are confronting it, what seems far more likely is that they are raising men's ideas of what women want rather than issues put on the public agenda at the insistence of women. The presentation of last year's conventions and the coverage of the Olympics had far less to do with meeting the needs and desires of women than with patronizing them, with reducing them to reflexively empathetic, maternal creatures incapable of dealing with the "hard" aspects of politics or sports or, presumably, anything else.

Whether there is any such thing as a "women's agenda" is open to debate. The number of women elected to public office is steadily rising, yet this has not produced a concomitant increase in attention to so-called "women's issues." Occasions such as last week's White House meeting are mere window-dressing, distractions from the conventional business of government, business that is conducted pretty much as usual even though women have become active, influential participants in it.

Those inclined to take the dark view will complain that this is explained by an unchanged reality: To succeed in politics, or business for that matter, women have to subordinate their "feminine" side to accommodate the dominant "masculine" culture. Probably there is some truth to this. Yet the larger truth may be that the business of government, like the business of business, won't change much no matter who's running it. Though there may be a certain reflexive responsiveness to matters of particular interest to women, the old standbys still have to be dealt with -- public debt, national defense, civil rights and liberties -- and still are at the top of the agenda.

Not merely that, but these are issues that government is designed to deal with, however ineptly it may do so. Government is not designed -- at least not in this country -- to micromanage the rearing of infants. The sincerity of Hillary Clinton's interest in that may be unassailable, but its appropriateness as an issue for federal intervention is, at the least, questionable. Yet as politicians scurry to stay ahead of the ever-shifting electoral curve, there are likely to be more mechanical bows to alleged "feminine" concerns and ever less attention to gender-neutral questions of government policy. Precisely how that adds up to "progress," for women or anyone else, is exceedingly difficult to discern.

Jonathan Yardley's Internet address is yardleyj@clark.net

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Addressing a Conflict Raised By Children and Careers

Hillary Clinton Hosts Conference on Early Education

By Peter Baker
Washington Post Staff Writer

No matter how obvious her pregnancy became, Hillary Rodham Clinton noticed that her partners at a Little Rock law firm did everything they could to avoid raising the subject. "I just kept on getting bigger and bigger and bigger and they kept averting their eyes and not dealing with it," she recalled the other day.

So in the absence of any formal policy or even much discussion, the future first lady took it upon herself to decide she would take four months of maternity leave after the birth of her daughter.

More than 17 years later, Chelsea Clinton has grown up and is getting ready for college, but her mother is still trying to force issues to the table that defy easy answers, even for her. This time, however, she can use the power of the White House to force others to pay attention.

As she hosts a day-long conference on early childhood education in the East Room today, Hillary Clinton hopes to focus more attention on new research on the importance of the first three years of life to a child's brain development. Yet her latest project exposes a subtle tension for the nation's most prominent working mother: how to encourage parents to be more attentive to their toddlers without seeming to betray her feminist ideals by urging career women to stay home.

"That's the real challenge they face," said Douglas J. Besharov, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and editor of a recent book on early childhood. "They've got to somehow present this in a way that doesn't make women who either have to work for financial reasons or emotional reasons or because that's what they want to do feel too guilty about it."

Today's event, informally referred to as the "brain conference" around the White House, will include President Clinton and a plethora of scientists, pediatricians, religious leaders and others and will be broadcast by satellite across the country. The assemblage will examine recent studies on child development and explore their implications on public policy and private behavior.

In many cases, the lessons drawn from the research surely will be met with universal agreement. Just yesterday, as part of the buildup for the conference, Hillary Clinton announced a national partnership aimed at getting children's doctors to "prescribe reading" aloud for parents of infants and toddlers.

However, the underlying message of the conference touches on the larger societal anguish over finding the proper balance between family and work in an age when 57 percent of mothers of children under age 3 work outside the home. It's a conflict that the first lady acknowledges even as she tries to tiptoe around it.

During a briefing for reporters earlier this week, Clinton endorsed the idea of six months of government-mandated paid maternity leave, but then immediately dismissed it as politically impossible. Asked if the latest scientific data should persuade new mothers to stay home for three years, she reflected the ambivalence felt by many young parents.

"I think that a person could draw that conclusion—and a person could also draw the conclusion that I don't need to stay home for the first three years of life to be an attentive, involved parent," Clinton said. "We have to be careful not to send any sort of uniform, cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all message because parents come in all sizes, shapes and experiences, and so do babies."

To some extent, her thinking underscores the evolution of the gender revolution, according to some scholars. Frances K. Goldscheider, a sociology professor at Brown University who has written extensively on families, said the first half of the revolution was effectively anti-family because women were "trying to be like men." Now, she said, society is entering a new stage in which she hopes the rules will not be so rigid and women and men can stay home without jeopardizing their careers.

"I'm comfortable with having lots of parents around the first year," Goldscheider said. "I think it's insane for young mother attorneys to try to get back to the office within the first two weeks. . . . It's taken me a while to come around to this, as a feminist for 30 years, but families are just too important."

Even without input from her colleagues, of course, Hillary Clinton's choice all those years ago was far easier than those confronting many young mothers today. At the time, she was living in the Arkansas governor's mansion, remained a partner at the Rose Law Firm and still received her compensation at the end of the year.

For hundreds of thousands of women on welfare, on the other hand, the Clinton administration essentially made the choice for them. Legislation signed last year to overhaul welfare will force many mothers to work, an issue that troubled the first lady, as she made clear during this week's briefing.

But she said that after much thought, she came to the conclusion that it is unfair for the government to "support other women to stay at home when [many of] the women in the work world didn't have that choice."

Besides, she stressed, the responsibilities of child rearing should not fall entirely to women, and the amount of time spent with a child is only one factor. "A depressed, lethargic, uninvolved mother, whether she is living in a housing project or in a palace, has a detrimental effect on the quality of parenting and interaction with her child," she said. "And so we have to be more thoughtful about this."

The Washington Post

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1997

D.C. Students Give Gift of Themselves

10th-Graders Helping To Teach First-Graders

By Sari Horwitz
Washington Post Staff Writer

Cardozo High School teacher Spencer Salas used to watch the tiny, spirited children running to elementary school across the street in the morning and wonder how he could harness their energy to motivate his 10th-graders, who often straggled in late.

His creative answer—a program in which Cardozo's 10th-graders help teach the Meyer Elementary School first-graders how to read by sharing stories they have written—drew first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and other city and national leaders to Cardozo last week.

Clinton—joined by D.C. school Chief Executive Julius W. Becton Jr.; former senator Harris Wofford (D-Pa.), the chief executive officer of the Corporation for National Service; and D.C. Council member Frank Smith Jr. (D-Ward 1)—said that Salas's program is just the kind of learning experience she wants replicated in other District schools.

The Cardozo program is part of a larger "service-learning" initiative coordinated by Funds for the Community's Future. The organization will send AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to every D.C. high school next year to encourage similar programs that blend service projects with classroom lessons.

At Cardozo, in the Shaw neighborhood of Northwest, the 10th-grade tutors are Latino students, many of whom have been in this

See CLINTON, Page 2, Col. 1

CLINTON, From Page 1

country only a few years and are struggling to learn to read English themselves.

"Both groups of students learn from each other," Clinton said. "This improves the Cardozo students' own skills in English and writing, and it improves the young children's reading skills."

The students and their teacher said that perhaps an even more

***"Both groups of
students learn from
each other."***

— Hillary Rodham Clinton

valuable experience is being shared by Cardozo's Latino students and the group of children, most of them African American, they tutor—an understanding and appreciation of each other.

Long-simmering tension between African American and Latino students is a growing problem at Cardozo and other city schools. But there's an altogether different relationship between the Latino

tutors and the African American children they read to, said the students.

"Little children don't judge you," said Sonia Medrano, a 10th-grader who moved to Washington from El Salvador a year ago. "They just see the person you are. They accept us no matter what the color of our skin is or what race we are."

The story Sonia read to the first-graders yesterday was one she wrote about an African proverb that "a thief is always under suspicion." Her story recalled the time money was missing from her room and she discovered that her brother, Jaime, took it.

"Now when I leave my money and I don't find it again, I think Jaime took it again," she read to the children. "And maybe he didn't take it." A first-grader asked her what the words *thief* and *suspicion* meant. Clinton asked Sonia how long it took her to write the story (15 minutes).

"It makes you feel important when you're teaching someone," Ada Garcia, another Cardozo tutor, told Clinton. "It makes you feel like you are something."

Clinton has visited five District schools in recent months. Last week, she and Canadian first lady Aline Chretien joined sixth-graders

at Burrville Elementary in Northeast who waved and said hello to students at a Canadian school with the help of video conferencing technology.

Clinton won over Cardozo's faculty with her praise for the school's junior ROTC members, her interest in their two-year-old program and her participation in a round-table discussion. She scored big with students and teachers when she accused reporters of focusing mostly on youths who get into trouble.

"The president and I know the vast majority of our young people are doing the best they can to navigate through their teenage years," Clinton said.

The Washington Post

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1997

JUDY MANN

Making the Most of the Early Years

The most critical developmental period in a child's life occurs between birth and age 3, when millions of circuits in the brain develop and either flourish or are sloughed off, depending largely on the kinds of stimulation the infant receives from parents.

New techniques for studying the brain, from ultrasound recordings of fetuses to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to Positron Emission Tomograph (PET) scans, are enabling neuroscientists to chart the course of both normal and abnormal brain development in ways that were unimaginable 20 years ago. The results are revolutionizing our knowledge about the importance of brain stimulation in a child's earliest years.

Children who are adequately and properly stimulated do better in motor and language skills, memory and sensory perceptions and impulse control, as well as in the capacity for emotional attachments.

Over the past several years, the far-reaching significance of these findings has made an impact on some of America's preeminent foundations and citizens, including President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Tomorrow, they will be hosts of a conference to showcase this new brain research and what it means for parents and caregivers. At a briefing for journalists on Monday, Hillary Clinton said she hopes the conference will get everyone, from parents to social institutions and businesses, thinking about a variety of ways we can help parents be most effective.

The idea that you are born with the brain you have and nothing can change it "is a very pessimistic message about human capacity dressed up as science," she said. "We are the result of both nature and nurture, and this debate should be called a draw." The implications of the research on how we raise children "can have more impact on what kind of country we have than what passes as news on a day-to-day basis," she said.

At the briefing, Clinton was flanked by David A. Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which was among the first to draw public attention to the research three years ago, and by Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The institute has done or funded almost all the research

that has been conducted on child development—and it has proven that, contrary to previous belief, infants see, differentiate their mother's voice from others, express emotion and feel pain. (We mothers were right all along.)

"We are not born with all the nerve cells we will ever have," Alexander said. "There is a selective dying off of nerve cells. The ones that are stimulated are the ones that are maintained" during the process in which brain connections proliferate. A new study from the institute "showed the greatest influence in the child's cognitive development is its family. Good quality day care had a positive impact," he said, but he described it as an "add-on impact."

Clinton said she often runs into parents who still don't know what babies are capable of doing and learning. She said that all those games we play with infants, from itsy-bitsy spider to peek-a-boo, now are clearly important to stimulating their development. In addition, she said, it's important to talk, read and sing to young children and to take them outdoors.

Alexander said it's also important to stimulate physical movement by babies and to have close body contact with them. "You never outgrow a hug," he said.

The research documents the importance of secure early relationships between infants and parents and as such is a strong argument for the kinds of extended paid parental leaves routinely enjoyed by parents in Western European countries. By contrast, the United States took eight years to pass an unpaid parental leave bill that would be a joke among most of our trading partners.

The new research on early brain development has enormous implications for our school and penal systems. Children who go to school ready to learn will do better and stay longer. Children who can control their impulses have a better chance of staying out of trouble. But what's important to understand is, this trajectory of success or failure appears to be set by the time a child is 8 years old.

"If we invested on the front end, I honestly believe we would not be spending as much on prisons, mental health, drug abuse" and all the other results of family breakdowns, Clinton said.

Common sense has argued this for a long time, but now science is backing it up. We should start listening. It could be the best investment we've ever made in the future of our country.

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1997

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The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1997



Patricia F. Lewis

04/02/97 05:42:47 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Nicole R. Rabner/WHO/EOP, Pauline M. Abernathy/OPD/EOP
cc:
Subject: Attached

April 2, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR MARSHA BERRY, ANN LEWIS, LORRIE MCHUGH

FROM : PAT LEWIS

RE: : EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE PRESS PLAN

1. Magazines/periodicals (Pat, Marsha)

- Background conference call 4/4 with major education, women's and parenting magazines to outline event. (See attached list.)
- Distribution of FLOTUS remarks on 4/3 to national and regional parenting publications, education and health publications, and to reporters attending research conference.
- Marsha to call key DC reporters 4/2 about speech

2. News Magazines (Pat, Marsha, Lower press)

- Working with individual reporters who specialize in early development issues at news mags, beginning week of 3/31. Will coordinate with press office to make sure White House reporters also receive information. (FYI -*Newsweek* is already planning a special issue to run the following week, sponsored by Johnson and Johnson.)

3. Regional Press/satellite (Media Affairs)

The opportunity exists for major regional press centered on regional conferences, which will be built around viewing the opening remarks and morning session. (Kris Balderston will have a contact list for the regions by Thursday; there will probably be five solid regional events scheduled, including Ft. Worth, Kansas City, Seattle, Los Angeles. Laura is setting up the satellite program.) The advisory, accomplishments piece, panelist bios and summary of conference will be provided to each region as soon as possible. (Pat, Nicole/Pauline, Kris)

Given that this is a full-day conference, Media Affairs would like to do extensive advance press, previewing the conference and highlighting Administration accomplishments.

- A complete advisory, with panelist and satellite information, will be sent out no later than 4/10. (Pat)

- White House media affairs office will schedule conference calls between senior staff and cabinet members, and regional print and radio. Those will include parenting programs and columnists who focus on parenting issues. (This can start as soon as the Administration accomplishment piece is ready for distribution and the panels have been finalized.)(MA)

4. Columnists/Washington reporters

- One on one calls with national columnists by senior staff involved in conference to begin once accomplishment piece is ready. (Pat, Marsha - possible staff include Bruce Reed, Ann Lewis, Melanne Verveer.)

- Possible First Lady roundtable prior to conference (Marsha)

- Briefing for White House press corps 4/17, at the top of Mike's briefing, during the break (Pat, w/lower press, Lorrie -- possible briefers include Bruce Reed, Shalala)

5. Television

- First Lady interview to possibly be pitched to morning, possible magazine, health or parenting programs as part of related package (Stuart, Pat, Marsha)

- Morning shows day of event -- possible First Lady, Mrs. Gore, panelist interviews. (Stuart, Pat, Marsha)

- CNN Guest Source day after event (Stuart, Pat, Marsha)

(FYI - Lifetime Television plans to cover the entire conference, and will have an executive in the audience.)

6. Day of the Conference

- Press coverage will be tight pool all day, with rotating pools to accommodate print and specialty reporters who want to attend. (Pat, w/ MA, Jeremy)

- Interviews with panelists following morning and afternoon sessions; possible audience interviews following afternoon session. (MA)

(FYI -- Zero-to-Three's parents' poll will be released at start of conference -- embargoed copy to be distributed 4/16.)

7. Post-conference

- White House home page will highlight the conference and provide links to resources (Jeannine Smartt, White House Web Team)

- Materials distributed on the conference (transcripts, published report) (Pauline, Nicole and Education are producing report in conjunction with Communications.) (MA)

- Mass mailing to specialty parenting, education, science, health publications and organizational newsletters w/photo, transcripts, and panelist information. (Pat)

- Editorial board mailing to top 250 ed boards. (MA)

8. Cabinet Outreach

- Pre-conference, will ask for time from Secretaries Shalala, Riley, Browner and Glickman for conference calls with regional and specialty print and radio reporters. (MA)
- Will work with HHS public affairs to schedule roundtable with health care reporters. (Pat, w/HHS)
- Day of the Conference, assistant secretaries may participate in regional events. (Cabinet Affairs)

White House conference takes a look at kids' needs

by William Neukirk
WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON—Calling early childhood development the key to better future, President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on Thursday challenged parents and communities to apply the new insights of brain research to the care of infants.

In doing so, they confronted one of the basic problems of contemporary American family life, in which both parents typically work and leave their children in the care of others. Sometimes infants are deprived of the parental communication and mental nourishment now considered crucial in the first few months of life for developing language skills and other reasoning ability.

The first couple called for efforts by communities and health organizations to spread the news to parents and said the federal health-care program for the poor, Medicaid, could be adjusted to take advantage of the research.

"We need to clear the air and have an honest debate about child care—the good, the bad and the ugly," Mrs. Clinton said. "Many of us don't have the choices."

The president said that the first three years of a child's life are especially critical in healthy development.

The Clintons said the research findings have enormous political, social and economic implications.

"If we, as a nation, commit ourselves now to modest investments in the sound development of our children, including especially our very youngest children, we will lay the groundwork for an American future with increased prosperity, better health, fewer social ills and even greater opportunities for our citizens to lead fulfilling lives in a strong country in the next century," the first lady said.

Citing recent research, the Clintons said that reading, talking and singing to babies can help stimulate their brains and facilitate language development and reasoning.

Patricia Kuhl, a neuroscientist at the University of Washington in Seattle, told the president and first lady that 6-month-old children "are well on their way to cracking the language code" by picking up word and language patterns from their parents.

Carla Shatz, neurobiologist at the University of California at Berkeley, compared the brain's early development to building a



AP photo

The president and first lady preside Thursday over a White House symposium on child-rearing and "talking about baby talk."

telephonic system requiring many connections, with parents playing a key role in helping the child's brain develop.

The president called for continuing efforts to improve child care.

Clinton compared the new findings to man's forays into space.

"This may be the most exciting and important exploration of all," he said. "This must always be part of the public's business, because we all have a common interest in our children's future."

The president announced a few modest steps he said would help the effort. He directed Defense Secretary William Cohen to use his department's expertise in providing child care to help civilian day-care centers around the country. He requested that early Head Start programs be expanded by a third next year.

He also announced the government is sending kits to early childhood programs in the U.S. that "offer suggestions to families and caregivers about developmentally appropriate activities for children ages zero to 3."

The president and first lady made clear that more is needed, such as expanding national health care coverage to children and finding ways to get the message to all parents that stimulating the brains of babies pays off in the future.

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, professor of pediatrics emeritus at Harvard University Medical School,

said that modern stresses on parents often detract from helping infants develop. He also sharply criticized the welfare reform law that Clinton signed last summer that would require welfare recipients to work or to provide more discounts to low-income workers to make child care affordable for them.

Deborah Phillips, a child care expert for the National Research Council's Commission on Social and Behavioral Sciences, said 30 percent of America's infants experience some non-parental child care in their first 12 months. Some 15 to 20 percent of day-care facilities are "dismal or even dangerous" to children, she said.

Affectionate efforts by parents to stimulate an infant's brain are much more powerful than the influence of day-care centers on child development, she said.

"There are a lot of interesting programs," Mrs. Clinton said. "We do know what works. We know how to intervene. We do not have a systematic way to do it."

Overhauling the way children are treated under Medicaid should be considered, she said, and the research on child development provides a "good opportunity for HMOs (health maintenance organizations) who are serious about cutting costs down the road," she added.

OPTIONAL FORM 39 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

To: **Kris**

From: **Eric**

Page: **3**

DATE: 04-25-97 03:52PM

TIME: 03:52PM

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

CHICAGO
TRIBUNE
4/10/97
P. 2A

'Brain nourishment' essential for a nation of mentally healthy children

It's only a one-day conference on April 17, limited to the number of influential people who can be packed into the White House's East Room. But the idea President and Mrs. Clinton are plugging is one of the most exciting of the century, its implications are staggering and its promise is mind-boggling.

The title is almost as long as a press release: The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children.

It's time the idea got a strong presidential push, especially from a chief executive who wants to be called "The Education President" and a first lady who has found a niche as an advocate for kids.

Research accumulating for more than three decades now shows beyond doubt that the quality and quantity of early mental stimulation—opportunities for appropriate learning from birth on—help determine how capable a child's brain will be for life.

Learning stimulation in the first few years of life actually influences the physical make-up of the brain, how the neurons will interconnect, how well the brain will "think," how "smart" the child will be. Educational opportunities later on in life do not affect the brain in the same way or have such an important impact.

An environment rich in appropriate opportunities to learn can raise a child's potential IQ by 20 to 30 points (by the inexact measures of intelligence available) because of its impact on the development of the brain. Mental malnourishment in the first years of life can lower potential IQ permanently, beyond what even the best schooling can compensate for completely later on.

Schooling can help a child use the brain he has effectively, give him vast amounts of information and motivate him to learn. But only in the early years of life can mental stimulation actually change the brain to make it a more effective organ of thinking.

Now, the challenge is to identify the kinds of learning experiences that nourish young children's brains best and how they can be made available to all our kids. Some participants in the White House conference will talk about model programs being developed in several communities around the country.

Despite the excitement and promise of neurological research on brain development, early learning ideas have been slow to become part of mainstream child care and education.

Many leaders in the growing field of early childhood education are still too tradition-bound to appreciate the potential of the new neurological research and misunderstand early learning as imposing formal and inappropriate lessons on restless youngsters. Their programs concentrate on emotional development, social behavior and nutrition—necessary, of course. But parents, politicians and donors may be misled into assuming they provide more neurologically based mental stimulation than they actually do.

More than half of all mothers with young children now hold jobs outside the home, limiting the time and energy they can devote to their youngsters. Using early learning strategies can make their time

Joan Beck



together happier, more beneficial to the children and more rewarding for the parents.

Much of what good parents do by instinct or because it makes their children happy provides good nourishment for their brains. Talking to a baby, responding to his efforts to communicate by body language or by babbling, creating safe spaces at home where he can explore freely, just giving him something new to see or do when he fusses out of boredom all help the brain to grow.

Parents need more ideas about brain-nourishing activities. They need more time and more flexibility in their jobs so their children don't have to come in second so often. Most of all, they need a new understanding and appreciation of how much they can contribute not only to their youngsters' physical and emotional well-being but to their growing intelligence.

Public school systems generally ignore children younger than age five and are too hard-pressed financially to explore the possibilities of reach-out programs. Day-care centers often talk about their learning programs but most provide traditional nursery school fare and lack enough trained teachers to give all of their charges optimal individual mental nourishment.

Many of the special programs set up to give early learning help to high-risk youngsters in poor areas have had only minimal success. They usually use traditional day-care models and give priority to youngsters' urgent physical and emotional needs.

This is what happens in many Head Start programs, which generally offer too little, too late, in the way of mental nourishment. Early Head Start, begun in 1994, is intended to help children from birth to age 3 in low income areas, but is still too small and too new for good evaluation.

The promises of early learning based on new neurological research are too exciting to brush over lightly or to push aside after the White House conference in the rush of other political matters. It isn't clear yet, however, how best to make the advantages of these new findings available to all our children, especially those in dysfunctional families and those at risk of eventual school failure.

That's where the president and first lady could really make a difference. By sticking with this idea for the rest of his term. By using whatever funding Clinton can bully out of Congress to start and expand model programs. By pestering Head Start administrators to upgrade standard day-care fare with special brain-nourishing components. By generating the national sustained excitement that the promise of the new research deserves.

The idea could do a lot for the Clintons—as well as for the nation's kids.

Friday, April 18, 1997

The Columbus Dispatch/2ND FRONT PAGE

Clinton experts share beliefs on raising kids

WASHINGTON (AP) — Talking about baby talk and how brains grow, President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton offer simple child-rearing advice: Songs and stories up infants' brainpower.

The president, surrounded by researchers and child-care experts in a room, compared the growing understanding of how to nurture babies' intellectual and emotional growth with space exploration.

"This may be the most important exploration of all," he said. "It's always been part of the public's business, because it's a common interest in our children's future."

"At first glance, it may seem a conference here at the White House talking about baby talk, but that discussion has been more important," Mrs. Clinton said at the daylong conference.

For the Clintons, two themes, the research's emphasis on early childhood and parents also raised a thorny question: Do mothers are better off staying at home?

Mrs. Clinton faced the question with help from Dr. Deborah Phillips, a expert with the National Research Council.

"Some people argue that research really tells us is that women with children should not work outside the home, per se," she said.

Phillips reassured her the evidence that placing young children in quality day-care impinges on the parent-child bond or stops learning.

A report by the New York Times and Work Institute, which formed the day's White House conference, found that in the first three years of life, the vast majority of synapses —

or connections among brain cells — are formed.

The ways in which parents relate with children during that formative period directly affect emotional development, prospects for learning, and ability to handle stress as adults, the report said.

Brain research from the past half-decade was presented yesterday by a panel of experts, including renowned pediatrician T. Henry Brazelton, whom the president and Mrs. Clinton engaged in lengthy discussions that were broadcast by satellite to nearly 100 "watching parties" around the nation.

Their goal was to bridge the gap between what scientists know and what parents practice. Film director Rob Reiner highlighted a drive by entertainment leaders to spread the word.

A national poll released in conjunction with the conference found that just 38 percent of parents feel sure they can tell if their children's emotional development is on track. Forty-four percent feel confident of recognizing the mileposts of intellectual development, according to the survey of 1,000 parents conducted last month for the "Zero to Three" project of the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families.

Both the president and his wife also put a political twist to day, arguing for more spending on early education, child care and health care. "If we, as a nation, commit ourselves now to modest investments in the sound development of our children ... we will lay the groundwork for an American future with increased prosperity," Mrs. Clinton said.

The president, who successfully mined the family-values theme in last year's campaign, announced two modest day-care initiatives: The Pentagon, with a respected international day-care system, will share its expertise with the private sector; and the White House will be host for a conference on child care next fall.



Associated Press

President Clinton pauses in the East Room of the White House while presiding over a conference on early childhood development and learning.

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P002

Omaha World-Herald

Friday, April 18, 1997 Page 17

Clintons Stress Importance Of Giving Kids Good Start

BY JULIE ANDERSON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton suggested Thursday that it is the public's business to see that the nation's youngest children get a good start in life.

The president said his administration will be pushing a number of early childhood initiatives — including expanded health-care coverage and Early Head Start programs — in the next year.

The Clintons led a symposium at the White House aimed at translating new research on how children's brains develop and making it available to parents, policy-makers and child-care providers. The conference was broadcast via satellite to Creighton University and about 100 other sites in 37 states.

The Clintons' main message was that the experiences children have in their early days, particularly the first three years, play a role in physically wiring the circuits in their brains and, in turn, in determining what kind of adults they will become.

"The song a father sings to his child in the morning or a story that a mother reads to her child before bed help lay the foundation for a child's life and, in turn, for our nation's future," Mrs. Clinton said.

The president said investing in children "will yield us the highest return in healthier children, stronger families and better communities."

And, he said, the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning serves as a way to "remind everyone in America that this must always be part of the public's business because we all have a common interest in our children's future."

The Clintons were accompanied by a panel of prestigious neuroscientists, pediatricians, child-care experts and others who have done some of the key research on early childhood development.

Nancy Walker, co-director of Creighton's new Center for the Study of Children's Issues, said the president setting aside an entire morning to participate in the conference "makes a very important statement about how important children are."

She said that commitment was particularly important in light of comments from Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a pediatrician and professor emeritus at Harvard University. Dr. Brazelton said he was horrified that the United States is one of the least family- and child-oriented societies in the world. Forty percent of U.S. children are not even immunized, he said.

Ms. Walker said she was thrilled that the conference emphasized the importance of quality child care. "I think that sends a really important message to corporations that now is the time to implement family-friendly corporate policies," she said.

The Creighton center was formed last July to sponsor research and discussion on children's issues that can be applied to real children, she said.

Part of the aim of Thursday's conference was to pass on new research to parents and others involved with children.

Mrs. Clinton said a new survey conducted by the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families "shows a real hunger on the part of parents for knowledge on how they can play a positive role in their child's early development."

Fortunately, she said, many of the activities that are easiest, cheapest and most fun also are the best for a child's development — such as singing, playing games, reading, storytelling, talking and listening.

She and several panelists also stressed, however, that parents should not be overly anxious about meeting children's needs and feel they need to enroll toddlers in reading, math and language classes. Simple activities coupled with warm, caring interaction will do the job.

Nor is it too late after children reach their third birthdays, they said. The brain remains plastic and can be rewired through adolescence or treated through therapy.

The president said he would take the following steps to further early childhood development:

- Issue an executive memo asking the Defense Department to pass on tips from its successful child-care programs by forming partnerships with civilian programs.

- Extend health-care coverage to children who aren't covered. The president said his budget, which has been submitted to Congress, would extend coverage to 5 million children by 2000.

- Expand the Early Head Start program for children from birth to 3 years old by one-third next year.

- Launch a new Justice Department initiative called "Safe Start" to make children safer. The program, based on one developed in New Haven, Conn., would train police, prosecutors, parole and probation officers in child development so they'll be better equipped to deal with situations involving young children.

About 50 people involved in early childhood education, child care and social services attended the Creighton session, which was sponsored by the City of Omaha's Enterprise Zone and Creighton's political science and international studies department.

CON'D ON NEXT PAGE

CHILDREN'S FIRST YEARS CRUCIAL, CLINTONS SAY (CON'D)

Age Determines Stimulus To Aid Youngster's Brain

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dr. William Staso, an expert in neurological development, suggests that different kinds of stimulation should be emphasized at different ages. At all stages, parental interaction and a conversational dialogue with the child are important. Here are some examples:

First Month: A low level of stimulation reduces stress and increases the infant's wakefulness and alertness. The brain essentially shuts down the system when there is overstimulation from competing sources. When talking to an infant, for example, filter out distracting noises, like a radio.

Months 1 to 3: Light/dark contours, like high-contrast pictures or objects, foster development in neural networks that encode vision. The brain also starts to discriminate among acoustic patterns of language, like intonation, lilt and pitch. Speaking to the infant, especially in an animated voice, aids this process.

Months 3 to 5: The infant relies primarily on vision to acquire information about the world. Make available increasingly complex designs that correspond to real objects in the baby's environment; motion also attracts attention. A large-scale picture of a fork, moved across the

field of vision, would offer more stimulation than just an actual fork.

Months 6 to 7: The infant becomes alert to relationships like cause and effect, the location of objects and the functions of objects. Demonstrate and talk about situations like how the turning of a door-knob leads to the opening of a door.

Months 7 to 8: The brain is oriented to make associations between sounds and some meaningful activity or object. For example, parents can deliberately emphasize in conversation that the sound of water running in the bathroom signals an impending bath, or that a doorbell means a visitor.

Months 9 to 12: Learning adds up to a new level of awareness of the environment and increased interest in exploration; sensory and motor skills coordinate in a more mature fashion. This is the time to let the child turn on a faucet or a light switch, under supervision.

Months 13 to 18: The brain establishes accelerated and more complex associations, especially if the toddler experiments directly with objects. A rich environment will help the toddler make such associations, understand sequences, differentiate between objects and report about them.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997

11A

Clintons' Advice: Sing, Read To Babies

Compiled From News Services

WASHINGTON — In a day of "talking about baby talk" and how brains grow, President Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton offered parents simple child-rearing advice: Songs and story-telling fire up infants' brainpower.

The president, surrounded Thursday by researchers and child-care experts in the East Room of the White House, said this decade's theories on nurturing babies' intellectual and emotional growth rival human forays into space.

"This may be the most exciting and important exploration of all," he said. "This must always be part of the public's business, because we all have a common interest in our children's future."

At the day-long White House Conference on Early Child Development and Learning, Mrs. Clinton marveled at recent studies showing that infants, at 6 months old, are well on their way to learning language. She recalled reading to her baby daughter: "We had no idea . . . that what we were doing was literally turning on the power in her brain, firing up connections that would enable her to speak and read."

Patricia Kuhl, head of the speech and hearing sciences department at the University of Washington at Seattle, said that "when we speak to our children something is happening."

"We are bringing about changes in the brain that will allow them to participate in the communication game," Kuhl said. "Infants are born to learn. Our role is to be good partners in this learning process."

A report by the New York-based Families and Work Institute, which formed the core of the White House conference Thursday, found that in the first three years of life, the vast majority of the brain's synapses — or connections among brain cells — are formed. How parents relate with children during that formative period directly affects emotional development, prospects for learning and ability to handle stress as adults, the report said.

"Fifteen years ago, we thought that a baby's brain structure was virtually complete at birth," Mrs. Clinton said. "Now we understand that it is a work in progress and that everything we do with a child has some kind of potential physical influence on that rapidly forming brain."

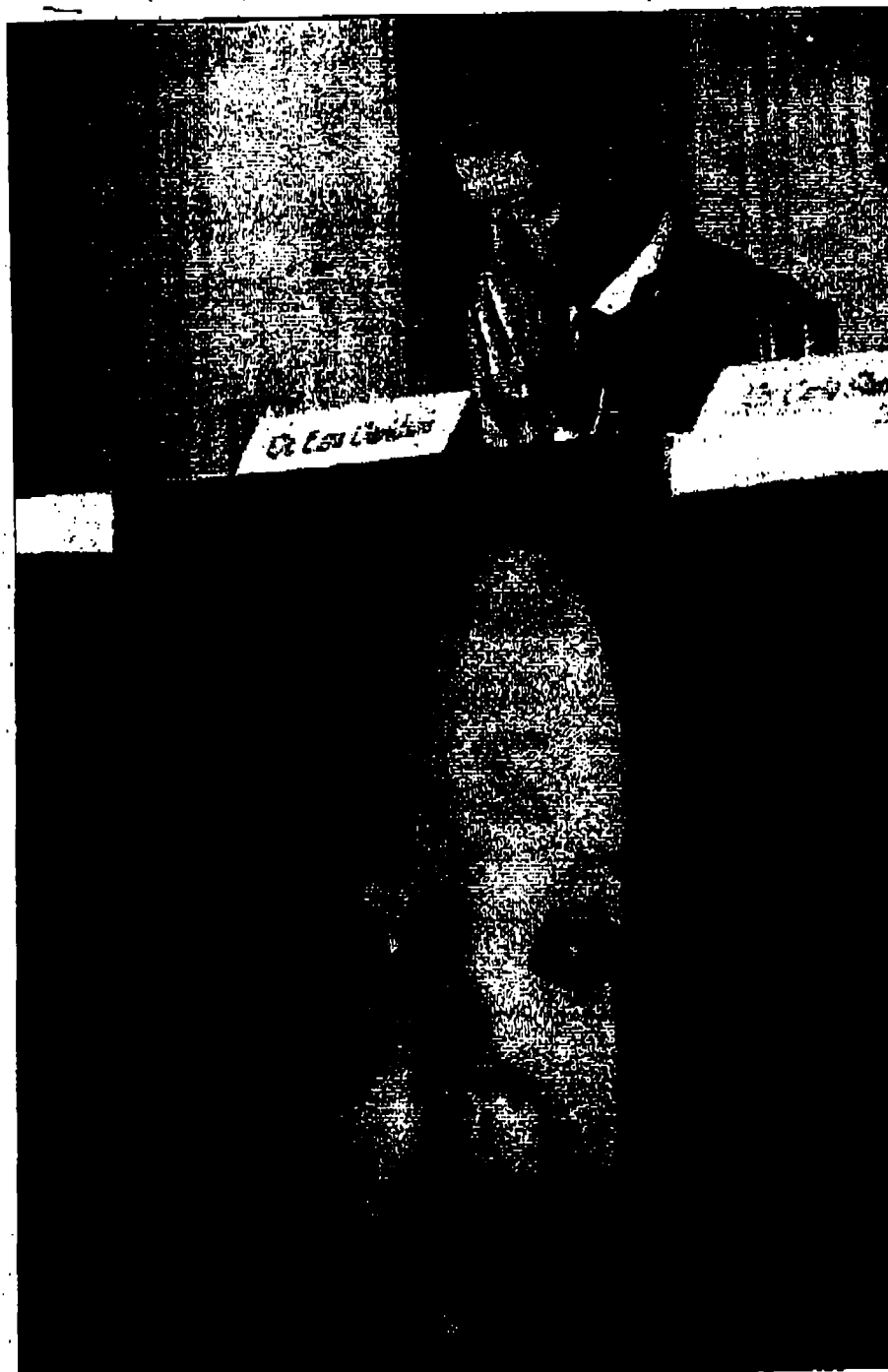
A panel of experts, including Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a renowned pediatrician, presented brain research from the last decade. The Clintons engaged the experts in lengthy discussions that were broadcast by satellite to almost 100 "watch parties" around the nation.

Joined in the afternoon by Vice President Al Gore and Tipper Gore, the Clintons' goal was to bridge the gap between what scientists know and what parents practice. Actor-director Rob Reiner highlighted a drive by entertainment leaders to spread the word, and Arnold Langbo, Kellogg's chief executive, committed his company to printing parenting tips on the backs of millions of cereal boxes.

The Clintons also put a political twist on the day, arguing for more spending on early education, child care and health care. "If we, as a nation, commit ourselves now to modest investments in the sound development of our children . . . we will lay the groundwork for an American future with increased prosperity," Mrs. Clinton said.

The president said that the Pentagon, with a respected international day-care system, would share its expertise with the private sector and that the White House would conduct a similar conference on child care in the fall.

CON'D ON NEXT PAGE

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997****CLINTON'S ADVICE: SING, READ TO BABIES (CON'D)**

President Bill Clinton presides Thursday over the White House Conference on Early Child Development and Learning. The goal was to bridge the gap between what scientists know and what parents practice.

THE DES MOINES REGISTER ■ FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997 15A

ESSAY/COMMENT

Clinton brainchild on education policy

Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton are engaging in a one-two punch for education. It's a lot less risky than overhauling health care. Whether it will be more successful is not yet clear, but at least it won't 7 percent of our economy at risk of destruction.

On his Saturday radio broadcast the president noted that being a parent was "the toughest job any person can have" (we can all agree on that) and he touted the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning that began Thursday.

The conference, popularly referred to in Washington circles as the "White House Brainchild," will examine research into the ways infants learn, stressing that a mom's intimacy with her child in the first three years encourages brain development. Hillary's in charge and the first lady will be an active participant. This is clearly her baby.

The first lady devoted her newspaper column last week to discuss how quality day care — the emphasis is on "quality" — can produce the same quality 3-year-old as a mother at home can. Or so says the research. But the more time babies spend in day care, the weaker their bond with their mothers. The consequence of a weak mother-child bond cannot be measured on a standardized test, but it affects the way a child learns.

Herein lies the dilemma for the president and the first lady as they embark on the trendiest part of their education-policy initiative: early childhood education. Their liberal base demands the government organize more hands-on programs for youngsters, pouring funds into "quality" day care and Head Start (even though Head Start benefits disappear in the third grade). These are the constituents the president enraged when he signed the

welfare-reform bill, which changed financial incentives to encourage women with young children to work outside the home.

Conservatives want tax incentives to encourage mothers to stay home with young children. They don't want mothers penalized by high taxes to pay for child care of others when the evidence shows educational and emotional benefits for the child with the stay-at-home mom.

The experts will argue about the diverse theories of early childhood development, and which of the theories should get the emphasis in policy — whether behaviorist, cognitive, psychosocial, developmental, neurological, cultural, environmental, linguistic, genetic or evolutionary. And that's the short list.

Early childhood education requires a diligent and disciplined follow-up for older children. In the highly respected Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) of 12-year-olds, American youngsters finished 28th in math — not only behind Singapore, South Korea and Japan, the top three countries, but behind Czechoslovakia, France, Russia and Germany and nearly everyone else. In science our students did slightly better, coming in 17th, but far behind some countries that spend considerably less on education than we do.

Adding insult to ignorance, TIMSS explodes the myth of a necessary correlation between excellence and the level of money spent on education. This explosion of myth contradicts (and enrages) the teachers' unions. The study concludes, albeit tentatively, that teaching methods even more than money determine quality education.

When the first couple visits an elementary school classroom in Washington, they tell the fable of the "Tortoise and the Hare," hoping to get the children to understand that the perseverance of the slow but steadily moving tortoise can triumph over the lazy, faster hare.

"It's a lot like reading," says the first lady. "If you do it slowly and carefully, and just keep at it, you can succeed, just like the tortoise did."

But even Aesop is now cast in doubt. How the tortoise succeeds also depends on the mother (and father) as well as the teacher of that tortoise.

SUZANNE FIELDS

writes for *The Washington Times*.

The Kansas City Star **E-3**

Saturday, April 19, 1997

Talking and singing to infants is fun and crucial to development

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."

HILLARY CLINTON
TALKING IT OVER

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 last few years researchers have found scientific evidence for what many parents always suspected: Time spent talking, singing and reading to an infant strengthens the bond between 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 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 and I recently were hosts of 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 brought 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 was transmitted by satellite to 80 schools, colleges and hospitals across the country.

I'm excited about the conference for several reasons.

First, we shared ways to help parents make sense of and apply this new knowledge in their daily interactions with children.

Second, we believe we spurred 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 helped 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 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 nonprofit organizations such as First Book have promised to contribute tens of thousands of free books to 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 preschool 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 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.

Clinton Syndicate Inc.

White House conference on children suggests local gov't role

By Sandra Reinsel Markwood
and Donald Murray

The importance of early childhood development and ways that parents, community organizations and government can help young children get off to a strong and healthy start was the focus of the April 17 White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning.

The daylong event spotlighted the latest research about how children develop during the first three years of life and explored the public policy implications of this research for local, state and federal government officials.

NACo was represented at the conference by Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Commissioner Jane L. Campbell. Campbell, who, prior to her election to the county commission, served in the Ohio legislature for 12 years, chaired Ohio's House Committee on Children and Youth and the Oversight Committee on Abused, Neglected and Dependent Children. She also served on Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Donna Shalala's Advisory Committee on Services to Families with Infants and Toddlers.

At the White House conference, new scientific findings were discussed which show that experiences during the first three years of life have a dramatic impact on brain development.

Surrounded by scientists, child care experts and policy-makers, President Clinton summarized the findings: "We all know that every child needs proper nutrition and access to health care, a safe home and environment. We know every child needs teaching, reading and playing, singing and talking." The scientific research, however, demonstrates that this type of social interaction and nurturing is critical to a child's physical brain development and ultimately their social development.

Mrs. Clinton stated that "much of the data supports what many parents inherently knew—that reading, playing, singing and cooing to children makes a difference. These experiences can determine whether children will grow up to be peaceful or violent citizens, focused or undedicated workers, attentive or detached parents."



Photo by Joan Brown Campbell

Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Commissioner Jane Campbell poses for a picture with T. Berry Brazelton, MD, at the April 17 White House symposium on early childhood development. Brazelton is professor emeritus of pediatrics at the Harvard Medical School and also hosts "What Every Baby Knows" on the Lifetime cable TV channel.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

[April 28, 1997]

Countdown

CHILDREN

from page 1

Much of the White House conference focused on the practical applications of this scientific research on the brain, particularly for parents and caregivers. Additionally, the conference was also intended to be a call for action to all members of society — including the health, business, media and faith communities, child care providers, and government — to use this information to strengthen America's families.

In a number of states, strong state-county collaborative partnerships have been designed that focus on the importance of early child development, using the county as the major service provider.

In North Carolina, for instance, county-wide collaborations currently exist in many of the state's counties to reach children and their parents at the earliest age to provide education, training and supportive services to ensure that infants and toddlers have a healthy start.

In Oregon, nearly all of the state's 36 counties have established Children and Family Commissions that provide a full continuum of services to children of all ages, but with special

emphasis on the first years of life.

Another speaker, David Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, highlighted the findings of "*Starting Points*," a study on early childhood development.

The report says that among the most industrialized nations, the United States has a "higher infant mortality rate, a higher proportion of low-birth weight babies, a smaller proportion of babies immunized against childhood diseases and a much higher rate of babies born to adolescent mothers.

"The risks are clearer than ever before," the report continues. "An adverse environment can compromise a young child's brain function and overall development, placing him or her at greater risk of developing a variety of cognitive, behavioral and physical difficulties. In some cases, these effects may be irreversible. But the opportunities are equally dramatic: adequate pre- and post-natal care, dependable caregivers, and strong community support can prevent damage and provide a child

with a decent start in life."

Many counties have implemented a variety of programs that assist young children and their families through:

- adopting family-friendly workplaces
- offering home-visiting services to first-time mothers, and
- establishing parenting programs in county hospitals.

Campbell maintains that "county commissioners have some of the same bully pulpit opportunities as the president does in our local communities. I would like to go back home and try to put together a community meeting that raises these same [early childhood] issues in our context — using experts from the community — that's something that counties all over the country can do. In most states, implementation of welfare reform rests on the county's shoulders. The county is the front door to services and we need to use that initial gatekeeper activity. The real change when we are looking at welfare reform is that our gatekeeper activity ought to be to find and identify the services that the family needs."

Clinton announced several policy initiatives that the Administration will seek to address concerning the needs of early childhood development. They are:

- HHS is requesting proposals to expand Early Headstart enrollment by one-third next year.
- Child care experts believe that the military child care system is now the best in the country. By issuing an executive memorandum to the secretary of defense, the president is asking the Department of Defense to use their expertise to help improve child care across the nation.
- The president's FY98 budget includes a children's health initiative that would extend health care coverage for up to five million uninsured children by the year 2000 by strengthening Medicaid for poor children, building state programs to provide health coverage for working families and continuing health coverage for children of workers between jobs.
- The Department of Justice will establish the Safe Start Program to

change the way in which law enforcement officers respond to children who are the victims of or witnesses to violence.

• The Department of Education is releasing "Ready-Set-Ready" early childhood development kits. Call 800/USA-LEARN hotline for details.

A related resource for those interested in helping children is the KidsCampaigns Web site <www.kidscampaigns.org>. This online resource directs people to points in their community where they can act to support the "five critical resources" outlined by the president's summit: mentor, protect, nurture, teach and serve.

Carnegie report on young children available

Copies of the Carnegie Corporation report on early childhood development, "*Starting Points*," are available for \$10. Contact: Carnegie Corporation of New York, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604; phone: 212/371-3200.

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EDITORIALS

Brilliant baby talk

E-4384C
Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke truly when she admitted that "at first glance, it may seem odd to hold a conference here at the White House devoted to talking about baby talk."

But in convening Thursday's East Room Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning to publicize incredible new findings about early brain development, the first lady and President Clinton bent their bully pulpit to one of their more useful projects to date.

Astonishing and relevant, the "brain" conference could have turned out touchy-feely. However, the day instead proved powerful because it promoted in a fascinating way some deceptively simple child-rearing advice - that talking to a baby fires up brainpower for life.

Such good effect was achieved because the Clintons used their day-long symposium not to repeat vague bromides about "nurturing" children but to connect stunning hard science on neurological development to specific practical suggestions on how to stimulate infant brain development.

Of chief interest here was the extraordinary insight - presented by brain, language and early childhood experts - that the neurological foundations of rational thought and problem-solving are largely wired in by age 1 - far earlier than had been supposed.

Mrs. Clinton marveled at this revelation and studies showing that infants have learned the sounds of their native language by six months. But of even more import, as Mrs. Clinton suggested, was the next point the researchers made: that spoken language, words voiced at the earliest stages from an attentive parent to a baby, have an astounding impact on the infant's development.

This may seem intuitive, as well as familiar to readers of child-rearing guides. Yet Thursday's proceedings gave new clarity, urgency and research grounding to fuzzier advice. For example, presentations Thursday contended not only that talking to babies is good but that the actual number of words an infant hears each day is the single most important predictor of later intelligence and school success.

Accordingly, the conference sharpened the conventional wisdom that infants will thrive intellectually if they are simply given lots of love. As it happens, said the White House panel, simple love isn't enough; there

needs also to come more purposeful effort by care-givers to engage with babies and stimulate them with a steady flow of words. Talk - and importantly, talk accompanied by attentive eye contact - makes all the difference in "literally turning on the power" in the child's brain, as Mrs. Clinton nicely remarked, and "firing up connections" that enable him or her to read and speak.

But Mrs. Clinton's conference did more than simply elucidate new science and new advice - it also opened a needed policy discussion. For example, since the period from birth to age 3 now appears even more vital than it did, it seems that parents may retain an even more critical role than was previously believed, and teachers less of one. That in turn might confirm that one of the parents should be encouraged, with tax breaks perhaps, to stay home to talk to the little ones. Or it might offer yet another rationale for government initiatives to provide stimulating, high-quality day care for infants whose parents work.

Likewise, the new knowledge about brain development implies intervention programs like Head Start may come too little, too late, since so much development happens in the child's first year. That suggests educators, policy planners, legislators and parents may want to begin developing ways to get the new word out earlier to families. It also makes great sense for school districts, health plans or the government to create a new sort of social worker: outreach workers who simply visit the families of newborns and preach the gospel of baby talk.

At any rate, the Clintons merit applause for a truly farsighted piece of presidential agenda setting. A real need exists to popularize insights on this vital topic when only 38 percent of parents feel sure they can tell if their children's emotional development is on track. That the Clintons have begun this work, and done it with style, says a lot about their alert minds. That their message is simple - talk to your baby - suggests they might even succeed at their project.

StarNet news link

The White House has posted remarks, resources and links relevant to Thursday's conference.

Actor-Director Focusing on Children

By MARY B. W. TABOR

LOS ANGELES — The President spoke in his State of the Union Message about the nurturing of children from the first days of life. The theme of the National Governors' Association convention in July was early childhood development. It was the subject of a special issue of Newsweek, an ABC-TV special and a series of public-service advertisements showing Dad tenderly holding Baby.

Behind the scenes, orchestrating this collective national visit to the nursery is the actor and director Rob Reiner.

So deep is Mr. Reiner's commitment that he put aside movie making for more than a year to get a national campaign called "I Am Your Child" off the ground. Its message is simple: the crucial groundwork for a person's emotional and intellectual life is laid between birth and age 3, and parents should have access to support services, if they need them, to help their babies develop.

"This is something that I've been thinking about for almost 20 years," Mr. Reiner said recently over lunch at Maple Drive, a Beverly Hills restaurant just steps from his office. "It is something deep in my core."

He and his wife, Michele Singer Reiner, a photographer, said they began thinking about a national campaign in 1994. They were new parents and veterans of psychotherapy, a combination that provoked constant discussion about how their behaviors affected their children, and they found it difficult to find scientific research on the subject.

But they also suggest that their own childhoods were somewhat lacking in the kind of nurturing they now believe is essential.

"I can tell you that both Michele and I have struggled tremendously in our lives," said Mr. Reiner, the son of Carl Reiner, the actor and direc-

tor. "Obviously, we got enough good to outweigh the bad, but I can categorically say that I can trace my struggles, and the difficulties I've had in functioning and fitting in, to early influences."

"You've seen 'When Harry Met Sally'?" he said by way of explanation, referring to his movie in which Billy Crystal plays a man who struggles with the notion of whether men and women can be both lovers and friends. "I rest my case."

At a robust 6 foot 2, Mr. Reiner, 50, has aged gracefully since his "Meathead" days on "All in the Family," his long brown hair and

Using a Hollywood power base to make gains in a new arena.

handlebar mustache giving way to a balding pate and salt-and-pepper beard.

His office at Castle Rock Entertainment is classic Hollywood, with leather screening-room chairs and framed posters of his films, among them "A Few Good Men," "This Is Spinal Tap" and "Stand By Me" as well as "When Harry Met Sally."

But the bulk of the paperwork on his desk these days is not screenplays or production schedules. Instead, the telephone messages, photographs and letters are from politicians and foundation heads, doctors and business leaders — the eclectic cast of the "I Am Your Child" campaign.

In less than three years, the Reiners have pushed aside the stereotype of the liberal Hollywood dilet-

tante by mobilizing scores of groups and people interested in children's healthy development and helping them form coalitions. It is a feat that has eluded many health-care workers, political figures and grass-roots organizations.

"I now have a power base and a media base and an ability to reach out to people and get a message across," Mr. Reiner said. "And if I don't use those capabilities to disseminate this information to the public, then, I think, that is negligent."

The Reiners' campaign started in 1994 when they arranged a meeting with Tipper Gore, who they knew had interests in protections for children and mental health issues.

"I just called her up," Mr. Reiner said. "I'd heard she was interested in mental health issues, and I tell you I was just a babe in the woods. I really didn't know who to call or what to do."

Mrs. Gore encouraged the Reiners to pursue the issue. Then, a few months later, they invited a group representing media, political and foundation interests to their home in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles for an afternoon meeting where they could exchange ideas and contacts.

"It started in a very organic way," Mr. Reiner said, smiling over a bowl of asparagus soup.

They became acquainted with Ellen Gilbert, an agent at International Creative Management who had connections in the foundation world, and they came across a 1994 Carnegie Corporation report called "Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children."

The report said that if a child received warm and responsive care in the form of talking, reading and playing, his brain could develop to its full potential. If a child is abused or neglected, the problems can compound over a lifetime.

They attracted the interest of Teresa Heinz, who offered financing from her philanthropy, and several other big name sponsors jumped on board, among them AT&T, which

paid for the public service advertisements; I.B.M., which agreed to pay for a CD-ROM with information for parents; Johnson & Johnson, which produced a parenting video that features Mr. Reiner, and Kaiser Permanente, which is sponsoring a conference for business leaders next year.

The next target was Washington. Just before the 1996 election, Mr. Reiner said, the couple asked to discuss their campaign ideas with President Clinton.

To their surprise, they were granted 15 minutes alone with the President and one of his aides.

"We told him all the things we were interested in," Mr. Reiner recalled. "And he said, 'What do you want me to do?'"

They asked that he make early childhood development a priority for his next term and mention it in his next State of the Union Message. And they asked for a White House conference devoted to the topic.

Barry Toiv, a White House spokesman, said that the President and First Lady had already been planning a conference on children, but that the Reiner meeting "meant the issue and the conference would get a tremendous boost."

"The Reiners brought energy, ideas and an ability to draw more attention to the effort," Mr. Toiv said.

The ball was rolling.

Mr. Reiner's status as a heavy hitting director has clearly been an asset. Who else could get Tom Hanks, Robin Williams, Shaquille O'Neal and Gen. Colin L. Powell and the Clintons to star in the one-hour ABC special to sing "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or read "Good Night Moon"? The special was broadcast on April 28 and will be repeated on Aug. 17.

In the video for parents, Rob Reiner appears talking about how "scary" it is to be a new parent and talks about the need to give children "consistent, predictable, nurturing

The New York Times
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1997

and enriching experiences."

Next February, "I Am Your Child" and Kaiser Permanente are holding a conference for the business community, to highlight what it can do to help insure a healthy start for children, like offering parenting programs, corporate day care, developing company health plans that promote early childhood development or working with government agencies to develop family resource centers.

Mr. Reiner plans to return to movie making, and has begun working on a film about domestic terrorism. But he said his passion is still for the "I Am Your Child" campaign — named after the Barry Manilow song used as its theme — and has begun talking to television executives about incorporating some of its themes in situation comedies like "Mad About You" and "Friends."

"Movies don't really hold the excitement for me that they used to," Mr. Reiner said, almost quietly. "To be totally honest with you, if I could make a really good living doing this, I would not make films, I would devote the rest of my life to this."

That would be welcome news, said child care advocates who have be-

come part of his coalition.

"It's a very exciting, positive thing that's happening," said Anne S. Arnesen, director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, a child care advocacy group based in Madison. "I Am Your Child" has "focused attention on something that good mothers and people in the child care business have known for years, but that hasn't been in the public consciousness."

Senator John Kerry, Democrat of Massachusetts, who is married to Ms. Heinz, cites Mr. Reiner as a key endorser of his recent bill that would expand programs for at-risk infants and establish a scholarship fund for child-care workers, among other things.

Perhaps the only irony has been a personal one for the Reiners. With the campaign has come long hours at the office and on the road. That has meant time away from their own two sons, ages 6 and 3.

"Here we are trying to promote children's healthy development and give parents tools for helping develop their children, and that has meant taking time away from our kids," Mr. Reiner said. "It's a constant push and pull."

By STEVEN A. HOLMES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5 — The idea of a national apology to blacks for slavery seemed to fade today as its originator acknowledged that it was unlikely to happen soon, and President Clinton backed away from it — at least for now.

A White House spokesman said today that Mr. Clinton had not rejected the idea of issuing an apology to African-Americans. But they said the President did not consider an apology at the top of his agenda, or the agenda of his advisory commission on race relations.

"The President has really, in a way, put that issue aside and said that's not going to be the focus of his race initiative; nor is it the place he believes we should really start the kind of discussion he is looking for, one that's aimed at bringing Americans together," Michael D. McCurry, the White House press secretary, said today.

Earlier this year, Mr. Clinton embarked on an effort to put the nation's racial problems in the forefront of the national agenda. He has named an advisory commission to work with him and is planning monthly public appearances devoted to discussion of the racial divide in America.

The idea for an apology to African-Americans originated with Representative Tony Hall, Democrat of Ohio, and Mr. Clinton had indicated it might have merit.

In an interview on Monday night on Black Entertainment Television, Mr. Clinton stopped short of dismissing the idea of an apology. But he said that his commission on race, headed by the historian John Hope Franklin, would be weighing the idea, and he wanted to hear panel members' views before making a decision.

"What I think I should do now is let this advisory board do its work and see what they have to say about the apology issue and all the related issues," Mr. Clinton said.

When Mr. Hall first suggested the idea, he said he thought it could start a process of healing between whites and blacks. He and a dozen other lawmakers, all of whom are white, sponsored a House resolution calling for the apology. They said they hoped that once the House approved the measure, the Senate and the President would follow suit.

But in an interview today, Mr. Hall acknowledged that his proposal had

not got much support and said he doubted it would be approved soon.

"It's something that I believe in personally," he said by telephone from Maine, where he is on vacation with his family. "It's a moral issue for me. I think it's right. It's raised an issue which hasn't been raised ever and it's raised a dialogue that's very, very important. I think it will happen one day. But I'm not sure it will happen while I'm in the Congress or maybe in my lifetime."

Mr. Hall's idea has generated an intense debate on talk shows and among people involved in civil rights

issues. The idea gathered some momentum when Mr. Clinton suggested in an interview in June that he was open to it.

"An apology, under the right circumstances, those things can be quite important," the President said on CNN at the time. "Surely every American knows that slavery was wrong, and that we paid a terrible price for it and that we had to keep repairing that."

Mr. Clinton added: "Just to say that it's wrong and that we're sorry about it is not a bad thing. It doesn't weaken us."

Despite the support from some people, leaders of most groups that are involved in the civil rights debate dismissed an apology as an empty

gesture unless accompanied by direct action, though the groups often differ on what that action should be.

"My own view, and our own view, is that an apology for slavery might be of useful symbolic value," said Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League. "But it does not address the bottom line issues of inequality, which are rooted in the gaps in education and economic opportunity."

Gerald Reynolds, president of the Center for New Black Leadership, a conservative civil rights organization, said: "An apology is nothing more than an empty gesture. I don't think it reduces crime or reduces teen pregnancy or improves the public school system."

Gore Made 44 Calls to Donors

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5 (AP) — In his aggressive effort to raise money for President Clinton's re-election campaign, Vice President Al Gore made 44 fund-raising calls from his office in the White House, phone records show.

Internal memorandums, obtained by The Associated Press, also show an extensive effort by Mr. Gore's staff to set aside time in his schedule to make phone calls soliciting campaign money from his desk near the Oval Office.

"Do you think we could get more time on the sked (45 min-1 hr.) to make more of these calls?" said one internal memorandum from Mr. Gore's office.

It is illegal for Federal employees to solicit money in Federal buildings. Mr. Gore has maintained he was not subject to that restriction even though in 1995 the White House Counsel, Abner Mikva, wrote that no fund-raising calls "may emanate from the White House."

In a staff memorandum dated Feb. 2, 1996, Mr. Gore was told: "You are making several D.N.C. phone calls." That was similar to memorandums sent to him that year on Feb. 9, April 26, May 2 and Oct. 4. An Administration official, speaking

only on the condition of anonymity, acknowledged the calls were made from Mr. Gore's office.

In March, when Mr. Gore's White House phone calls first became known, the Vice President said at a news conference that "On a few occasions I made some telephone calls from my office in the White House" using a campaign credit card.

Mr. Gore's spokeswoman, Lorraine Voles, said today that "the statements made by the Vice President were accurate."

Telephone records turned over to a Senate committee and first reported today by The New York Daily News show Mr. Gore made 48 telephone calls to donors from his office.

An administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said 44 of them were solicitations for money and 4 were calls thanking individuals for their work on a Democratic gala.

The phone records, given to Senate investigators by the Democratic National Committee, show the dates of each call, the individual Mr. Gore tried to contact and the length of the conversation. Some of the calls lasted less than a minute, indicating that Mr. Gore may never have reached some people on the D.N.C. list.

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1997

SOCIETY FOR NEUROSCIENCE

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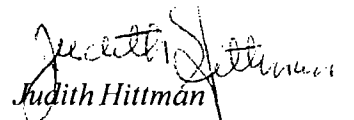
August 29, 1997

Dear Nicole:

*FYI, enclosed is a copy of the article on the White House
Conference that appeared in the Society for Neuroscience's
July/August newsletter.*

*Thanks so much for your help on this including the nice
photos.*

Kindest regards,


Judith Hittman
Communications Director

cc: Julie Mason

NEUROSCIENCE NEWSLETTER

White House Conference Melds Neuroscience and Public Policy

Following April's highly publicized White House Conference on Early Learning and the Brain, Society President Bruce McEwen issued a letter to the White House applauding the administration's leadership in educating the public on the social implications of neuroscience research.

The letter conveyed the neuroscience community's thanks to President and Mrs. Clinton for making the public aware of "vital research findings that have such immediate and far-reaching implications for early childhood learning and the intellectual potential of future generations." The letter also offered encouragement that the White House use the April conference as a catalyst for future educational activities melding public policy and science, as follows:

"I encourage you to consider the conference as a springboard for addressing other equally important findings regarding learning and development, for example, the issue of how to deal with

those children who are learning-impaired. These individuals must not be forgotten since their plight is a personal tragedy and an enormous social and financial burden. Modern neuroscience research, including recent progress in understanding mental illness and cognitive dysfunction, is providing hope that we can one day stem the tide against learning disabilities. ... There is new hope

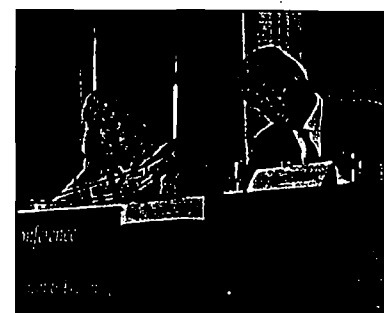
"I applaud you for making the public aware of vital research findings that have such immediate and far-reaching implications for early childhood learning and the intellectual potential of future generations."

—Bruce McEwen

that the brain can be induced to reorganize its connections and improve function," McEwen stressed.

President Clinton called for the conference during his State of the Union address in February. Hosted by the First Lady, the event convened scientists and childhood development specialists from across the nation, who presented the latest research on the importance of children's earliest experiences, particularly in the first three years of life, in shaping intellectual and emotional development. These findings were discussed in the context of community efforts aimed at supporting parents and educators in maximizing the potential of our young.

"The President has convened this conference with a clear mission ... to give leading experts the opportunity to



The President and First Lady during the April Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning.

explain their discoveries and put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families," said Mrs. Clinton in her opening remarks.

Among the panel of experts was Society Past President Carla Shatz, professor of neurobiology, University of California, Berkeley. Shatz likened the development of neuronal connections to laying down a telephone network and stressed the plasticity of the young brain. "A baby's brain is not simply a miniature of the adult's. It is a dynamically changing structure that records its experience in its wiring," Shatz told the audience. Other panelists included David Hamburg, Carnegie Corporation of New York (moderator); Donald Cohen, Yale Child Study Center; Society Member Patricia Kuhl, University of Washington; Ezra Davidson, Drew University of Medicine; T. Berry Brazelton, Harvard University; and Deborah Phillips, National Research Council.

The conference was carried by satellite to nearly 100 sites across the country and received extensive media coverage.

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New Officers to be Inducted at the 27th Annual Meeting

The Society will welcome its new officers at the 27th Annual Meeting in New Orleans, La. Dr. Edward G. Jones, University of California, Irvine, will be inducted as President-Elect 1997-1998 (President 1998-1999). Dr. Dennis W. Choi, Washington University School of Medicine, will be inducted as Treasurer-Elect 1997-1998 (Treasurer 1998-1999). Dr. Janis C. Weeks, University of California, will be inducted as Councilor 1997-1998.

NEUROSCIENCE

NEWSLETTER

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JULY/AUGUST 1997

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Nov 24	Jan/Feb issue
Jan 23	Mar/Apr issue
Mar 23	May/June issue
May 23	July/Aug issue

For permission to reprint articles, please contact the Executive Editor.

Opinions expressed in the *Neuroscience Newsletter* do not necessarily reflect those of the Society or of the officers and councilors.

1997 Important Dates

Tuesday, July 15—Annual Meeting hotel reservations processing begins; telephone lines open for hotel reservations.

Friday, Aug. 15—Last day for students to make Annual Meeting hotel reservations from student room block.

Friday, Aug. 22—Fall Membership Application receipt deadline.

Friday, Sept. 5—Education Workshop registration receipt deadline.

Friday, Sept. 5—Neurobiology of Disease Workshop registration receipt deadline.

Friday, Sept. 5—Short Course and Special Course registration receipt deadline.

Friday, Sept. 12—Advance Annual Meeting registration receipt deadline.

Friday, Sept. 12—Advance CME accreditation registration receipt deadline.

Thursday, Sept. 25—Annual Meeting hotel reservation deadline.

Monday, Sept. 29—Last day to request full Annual Meeting registration refund.

Friday, Oct. 10—FASEB Career Resource Center/Placement Service advance registration receipt deadline.

Saturday–Thursday, Oct. 25–30—Society for Neuroscience 27th Annual Meeting in New Orleans, La.

White House Conference

Continued from page 1

The event coincided with the release of a report by the Families and Work Institute called *Rethinking the Brain*, which addresses child rearing in

light of the latest research findings. "The impact of the environment is dramatic and specific, not merely influencing the general direction of development, but actually affecting how the intricate circuitry of the brain is wired," the report stated.

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