

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING:
WHAT NEW RESEARCH ON THE BRAIN TELLS US
ABOUT OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN

Afternoon Session

The East Room

Thursday, April 17, 1997
12:00 P.M. EDT

PARTICIPANTS:

MRS. GORE
THE VICE PRESIDENT
MRS. CLINTON

DR. GLORIA RODRIGUEZ, Avance Family Support Program, San Antonio, Texas

MS. HARRIET MEYER, Ounce of Prevention. Chicago, Illinois

MS. SHEILA AMANING, Early Childhood PTA, Charlotte, North Carolina

MR. MELVIN WEARING, Chief of Police, New Haven, Connecticut

MR. ARNOLD LANGBO, The Kellogg Company, Battle Creek, Michigan

MR. ROB REINER, CastleRock Entertainment, Los Angeles, California

GOVERNOR ROBERT J. MILLER, Nevada

A F T E R N O O N S E S S I O N

(3:16 p.m.)

MRS. GORE: Well, hello, everybody. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and learning. We have all gathered today so that we can share new ways of enhancing our children's lives and to secure their future and to secure the future of our country.

This afternoon, we're going to focus on the practical applications of the latest scientific research on the brain. As parents and as caregivers, we certainly can get our children off to a very strong and healthy start by positively impacting the first three years of their lives.

As the national spokesperson working with Secretary Donna Shalala on the Back to Sleep campaign to reduce sudden infant death syndrome, these first three years are of particular interest to me. As you hear many of the experts say today, remember that, in addition to the miraculous growth and development that takes place in the first several years of life, that some of the children in our country are particularly vulnerable to SIDS -- sudden infant death syndrome -- especially in the first year of life, from four

months to 12 months, in particular.

Each year, Al and I have been able to host and work with others in making sure that we could have a conference on families in Tennessee, and this has been a source of great learning and networking and joy for us. The conferences have put several issues on the table, and they allow us to discuss a lot of topics that people are dealing with in their everyday lives, and we're concerned about the struggles that families face in America.

These concerns, the ones that you are so familiar with, in conjunction with our commitment to family, are why we participate in the family conferences, and it's the reason that we are here today, as well. This Administration is committed to children and to families -- very, very committed, unshakably committed.

We want to ensure that every child has the opportunity to prosper and every family has the means and the tools and the knowledge to make that happen.

I have been very lucky to raise our four children with a very supportive and committed husband and father by my side, so no matter how full his schedule has been, he has often rearranged it. There are pro-family policies here in

the White House. I can tell you that. He always makes time for his family and is always there for us when we really, really need him.

So it is with great love and admiration that I introduce to you a great husband and, probably even more importantly, a wonderful father, Al Gore, our Vice President.

(Applause.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, shucks. Thank you. Thank you very much. I want to thank the First Lady for all these pro-family policies here in the White House, too; and Tipper and I want to thank the First Lady for the opportunity to participate in today's conference.

I want to briefly acknowledge Governor Lawton Chiles, who is here, and other elected officials. Of course, Governor Bob Miller is going to be introduced by the First Lady, along with Rob Reiner and the others on the program.

In the audience in addition to Governor Chiles, is Secretary Riley, Secretary Shalala, Representatives Tom Allen and Frank Riggs and Sheila Jackson-Lee, and Dr. Jack Gibbons, the President's science advisor. There may also be others. If I have overlooked other elected officials, it's unintentional.

This is an exciting conference for all who have been following it and participating in it, and it comes at a unique, spectacular moment in the history of human understanding. It is, of course, a new age of discovery that many have labeled the Age of the Brain.

Scientists have discovered much about the world that surrounds us, but the brain inside our skulls remains a source of mystery and wonder, and is, in a sense, the next frontier of human understanding.

This morning, you had presented some fascinating findings about what lies on this new frontier.

We learned from Gail Shatz that a baby's brain is constantly phoning home, completing a wiring process more complicated than in any telecommunications system.

Patricia Kuhl explained that a newborn arrives truly a citizen of the world, prepared to learn any language under the sun.

And Dr. Brazelton informed us that, from birth, children know who their most important caregivers are -- their parents.

All over the country, often with the help of federal research funds, scientists and physicians are mapping

this new scientific territory, and each new revelation seems more amazing than the last. But, of course, this is not a purely academic exercise. Each new discovery also suggests new ways to guide our lives, both as parents and public officials. That is why we are here today.

Some new knowledge arrives in our brains with an imperative attached to it. Once you know it, you have to act. When the First Lady wrote in her book, *It Takes a Village*, about the emerging discoveries in these fields, many people share with her the sense of urgency that comes with that knowledge, and she took the leadership, along with the President, in organizing today's conference.

In this afternoon's session, we'll learn how communities across America are putting this new understanding from neuroscience into action in the service of our children. For example, Arnold Langbo, CEO of the Kellogg Company, will tell us what business can do to support early childhood development.

Incidentally, I'm pleased to say that, later this year, Kaiser Permanente will host a national summit of business leaders this fall that will explore many of the themes that we're discussing in this conference, and develop

strategies for making sure that the infants and toddlers of their employees get off to a good start. Kaiser's CEO, David Lawrence, is in the audience, and I would like to recognize him.

We also have in the audience Ralph Larsen, CEO of Johnson & Johnson, a company with one of the most family friendly policies, as you might expect, investing heavily in child care and supporting Head Start.

This afternoon, we will also be hearing from Rob Reiner about how the media and entertainment industry can spread the word to parents and caregivers. Also, Newsweek Magazine will be distributing copies of a special issue devoted to this topic.

Then, we'll hear about the early Head Start Program that the Clinton-Gore Administration launched in President Clinton's first term, and about the innovative New Haven, Connecticut Police partnership, which is the foundation for the Safe Start Initiative that the President announced this morning.

These efforts and others you will hear about, and others like them around the country, require a deep commitment, but they are founded in good, old-fashioned

common sense. The breathtaking discoveries in neuroscience yield to simple, practical advice. Read to your kids. Talk to your kids. Sing to your kids. Dance with your kids. I've done that.

(Laughter.)

MRS. GORE: They didn't know it.

(Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That joke's getting old. I'm still distressed that people laugh at it, however.

Tipper and I have been working on some of these issues, for quite some years, and our annual family conference in Nashville has touched on some of the themes that have been addressed here today, and I would like to mention just one.

A few years ago, our family conference focused on the issue of fatherhood and the role of fathers in children's lives. Now, some of the new research you've been discussing is revealing that the attachment a child forms with his or her father is innate and critical to that child's development.

Children whose fathers are active caregivers tend to have higher IQs and are less prone to violence. And,

since fathers usually have different parenting styles from mothers, children with active fathers develop a richer set of emotions and a wider, more textured view of their world.

Incidentally, at this June's family conference, we will be focusing on the topic of the family and learning, and we'll be talking about the ways in which families can relate to schools and the learning process throughout a child's life.

We are very grateful to the President and First Lady for playing key roles in the family conferences of the last few years and, actually, this whole year, with the President's initiatives unveiled in the State of the Union Address and this conference, organized primarily by the First Lady, that is filled with such exciting discoveries, the focus on families and learning in June, the focus on child care later in the year, and the other activities related to learning and development and children, when you put it all together, we have an opportunity to put in place a set of new approaches and policies based on new understandings that can really make a profound difference for our country.

But the beginning is today's conference -- the beginning of what I hope will be an entirely new approach to

how private citizens and public officials fulfill their responsibilities to America's children.

You don't have to be a brain surgeon to understand the importance of these new discoveries, and you don't have to be a super-parent to make sure your child benefits. To take advantage of the new understandings that are being presented today about the human brain, you just have to use your head. You may quote that, if you wish.

(Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I want to, in introducing the First Lady as the moderator of this session, I want to presume to say, on behalf of all of us who have the privilege of participating in this conference, how grateful we are for her leadership.

We've heard a lot about the "bully pulpit" in the history of the White House. I think we're seeing a brilliant use of the bully cradle here today, and the President and the First Lady have assembled an outstanding group of experts who are opening our minds to new understandings. I'm looking forward to this session, and I want to invite behind this brain conference, our First Lady, to get us started.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much, Vice President Gore. I can see this will lead to an endless series of bad puns --

(Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: -- the most obvious of which is that doing what has been suggested here is a no-brainer.

(Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: I am delighted to be joined by the Vice President and Tipper Gore. I don't know of any two people who have been more committed, not only to their own family and to the wellbeing of their children, but to the wellbeing of all of America's children. I am very grateful for their leadership, friendship, and support.

We are excited by the people who have joined us on this panel, because each one is a doer, as we will now hear. They are people who don't just read an article in Newsweek about the brain and say, "Well, that's real interesting." They're people who say to themselves, "What can I do about this? This is something that has great potential, and I want to be part of helping as many people as possible learn about this exciting information."

Our first speaker, Mr. Arnold Langbo, is the CEO of

the Kellogg Company, based in Battle Creek Michigan. As I said this morning, Kellogg has launched a community-wide effort that Mr. Langbo will tell us about, which is already making a difference in the lives of the people of Battle Creek and particularly the employees of the Kellogg Company.

I would like to ask him now to tell us what Kellogg is doing and what the effects of that are. Mr. Langbo.

MR. LANGBO: Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Vice President, and Mrs. Gore, thank you.

I speak today on behalf of the group of business and education leaders that I represent from Kellogg's home town in Battle Creek, Michigan, and I appreciate this opportunity to report to the White House Conference how we have been working together to help make sure that every parent and every caregiver in our community is aware of this important new information on early childhood development that you are bringing to the attention of our nation here today.

My colleagues and I first became aware of this new scientific learning on early childhood brain development about two years ago and, at that time, we were engaged, looking very hard for ways to help improve student performance in our schools and, for several months, we

researched and debated curriculum changes, school choice, charter schools, character education, academic standards, student testing, and many, many others subjects.

These are all good ideas, and we are working on many of them in our community, but they simply won't, by themselves, result in the improved student performance that we seek.

The more we explored all of these issues, the more we realized that we needed to reach deeper into the more fundamental reasons why some children are succeeding in school while others, even before they enter school, seem destined for difficulty.

In looking deeper, we focused on three conclusions that led us to develop our program, which we called Learning Now.

Now, the first conclusion was based on research conducted in Michigan, which compared the relative influence that family, community, and other factors have on student performance. Amazingly, it concluded that factors outside of the school are four times more important in determining a student's success on standardized tests than are factors within the school.

This reaffirmed, for those of us in business, the importance of becoming partners with educators, parents, and other institutions in our community dealing with the development and performance of young people. What this means is that businesspeople cannot just sit on the sidelines and criticize but, rather, we must be involved.

Secondly, a survey of local kindergarten teachers revealed that about four of every ten children entering our schools are not adequately prepared. When we considered this information in conjunction with child health indicators and rates of abuse and neglect, and other key indicators, it became painfully aware that far too many of our children are not getting the start in life that they need.

Then, we became aware of the powerful new information about brain development being reported by the scientific community, and we began to understand that lost learning opportunities in the first few years of life simply cannot be made up later on.

With these understandings, the business and education partnership in Battle Creek became committed to helping ensure that every parent and every caregiver in our community is aware of and, indeed has access to easy to

understand information about early child development and brain stimulation.

Now, to accomplish this, we are using print and broadcast advertising, direct mail, payroll staffers, and, importantly, community forums. We are encouraging parents and caregivers in our community to call the well-publicized now Learning Now phone number, to receive information appropriate to the age of their child. Once signed up, parents and caregivers are mailed additional age-appropriate information at six-month and one-year intervals, until their child enters kindergarten.

We have received tremendous cooperation from many sectors of the community. Local print and broadcast media are matching Learning Now advertising expenditures dollar for dollar. Every mother who delivers at our community hospital receives Learning Now information before carrying their newborn home.

Noted pediatric neurologist, Dr. Harry Chugani, who is attending this conference today, was in Battle Creek recently to conduct seminars for child care providers and other early childhood professionals. Later this month, Ronald Kotulak, author of the book, Inside the Brain, will be

in Battle Creek for two days, conducting seminars again for parents, for caregivers, educators, and business people, about the brain development research covered in this morning's session.

Now, earlier I mentioned to you the use of direct mail to reach families, and I mentioned to Mr. Reiner this morning that, as a part of the Learning Now program, we are sending postcards to 6,000 households with young children in our community, encouraging them to watch your April 28th television special and to attend one of the community forums that Mr. Kotulak will hold in Battle Creek on April 29 and 30.

How is it all going? At this early stage, we couldn't be more pleased with the response that Learning Now is receiving. And I believe that, once you understand what is happening with brain development during the first years of life, you want every parent to know, so much so that I have become increasingly interested in what more Kellogg Company and other major corporations might do to spread this important information to parents and caregivers all over America.

With this in mind, I am sure that most of you here

today recognize that back panels of cereal packages are one of the most powerful communication vehicles in America. I'm sure that everyone here knows all about that because, as a part of our own early childhood development, you will all remember that we sent two boxtops to Battle Creek for our free submarine.

(Laughter.)

MR. LANGBO: Because Kellogg products have about 95 percent household penetration among families with children, I am committing at this important White House conference that Kellogg Company will begin a program to print at least two special cereal carton back panels focused on early learning with simple examples of the kinds of activities that anyone can use to encourage and enhance a child's development.

(Applause.)

MR. LANGBO: If I can, I would just like to give out a little more perspective for you. There are 35 million households with children in the United States and, with Kellogg's penetration of about 95 percent, our products are in about 33 million households. I'm told that this level of household penetration far exceeds the combined daily circulation of the 25 largest newspapers in the United

States, so this is a powerful mechanism.

Our intent is to help make tens of millions of American families aware of this new information from the scientific community. Our commitment is to children, to helping them reach their full potential. If our children reach their full potential, so can our country, and so can our society.

In a longer-term context, I think it's all about building broad-based community awareness, community by community, the networking that was discussed this morning, all across America, as to just how important a child's first years are.

I can't even begin to imagine the longer-term positive impact in our society of this. Any community in America that truly understands the importance of this issue will make young children its first priority.

Business has, I think, an enormous responsibility and accountability here. After all, 95 percent of the parents of these children that we're talking about are in our workplace, and we communicate effectively with them every day.

Again, my business and education colleagues and I

greatly appreciate all that you are doing here today to focus this nation's attention on this critically important issue for children. Thank you very much.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: We are just thrilled to hear what Kellogg is doing, and I look forward to reading the back of those cereal boxes, as I still do in the morning.

If I could, Mr. Langbo, could I ask, in addition to the outreach and the community leadership that your company is providing in partnership with other businesses and educators in Battle Creek, are there any kind of employment policies that businesses can adopt to support their employees as parents, so that this information that you rightly say can be conveyed effectively in the workplace can perhaps be more readily available?

MR. LANGBO: I think the answer to that is certainly yes. We have done a number of things recently in the workplace environment, certainly in part to provide a more meaningful maternity benefit for our families that are in this situation, but also, frankly, in an attempt to relieve some of the workplace stress situation. This was

touched on briefly, this morning.

Indeed, I think workplace stress is increasingly prevalent in our workplace. We do provide an opportunity, rather, for Kellogg employees, either the mother or the father, to take up to a three-month leave when the child is born. We have recently enhanced our flexible work hours, I think meaningfully, so as to allow more flexible work scheduling that would be helpful during maternity periods.

This, by the way, included an option for employees to do a certain number of hour of their work week at home, which again has been very favorably received, and I think, as I said earlier, it speaks to both of the issues -- stress, as well.

We have never, as a company, provided Kellogg day care. Rather, we have supported the local community entrepreneurs. But we thought it was timely, recently, that we fielded a questionnaire with all of our employees to ask the question of, "How well are we doing; is it satisfactory; does it need further assistance; and are there any other improvements that should be made?" Those are some of the things that we've added in the workplace recently.

MRS. CLINTON: Great. Thank you very much.

Our next presenter is someone I've known for a number of years, whom I was privileged to go to France with and visit their childcare programs, and she has been on the front line of providing support and services to parents through an innovative model program known as Avance. She started it in San Antonio. It has now spread much more widely across Texas.

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez is one of the most articulate spokespeople that one could find on behalf of the proposition that providing support for parents, giving them the tools that they can use to help themselves become better parents, is not only possible, but essential to be done.

Dr. Rodriguez, would you describe for us what Avance does and how it has worked with the parents you've been helping?

DR. RODRIGUEZ: Certainly. Avance is a program for parents who have young children under the age of three. We help them become the best parents they can be.

I thought I would begin by telling you how I started Avance 24 years ago. It started, as a very frustrated schoolteacher, when I saw six-year-old children in my first grade class being labeled as mentally retarded, as

vegetables, as slow learners. They were set aside and ignored.

I also saw parents loving their children, valuing education, wanting the best for their children, but they did not know what to do with their children prior to coming to school. From a little survey that I took of the parents, their expectations were very, very low. They thought their children were only going to go to the seventh grade.

So, we started Avance, in many, many neighborhoods, in schools, housing projects, in churches. We knocked on doors, and both mothers and fathers said that they wanted to help their children, and they wanted to learn what is it that they needed to do to get their children ready for school.

These were very, very poor families, many single, on welfare, and they just wanted the best for their children. So they attended a nine-month parenting program, a weekly program, where they learned of knowledge and child growth and development, from a very culturally sensitive Avance parenting curriculum.

They learned about the importance of talking and reading and allowing the child to explore and to experiment, to touch and to cuddle and do all those things that will

stimulate the brain and will help children develop to their fullest potential.

In fact, our Avance curriculum, for 24 years, has included a section on the brain. However, at that time, we were relating rat experiments and what we learned about rats, and now, with a new technology, we're seeing that the effects are the same with human beings.

Parents and children go on field trips to the library, to the zoo, to the circus, wherever we can get free tickets, to really stimulate the child's environment. Avance also becomes a broker connecting the family to the many social services, health services, educational services that are in the community.

In San Antonio alone, we bring about 100 services to the families. We connect the Avance children from the Zero to Three program to the Head Start program. We make sure they get immunized. The parents are then asked and encouraged to further their education, and we assist them in job training.

I have to tell you, Avance works. It certainly does, because we have seen it work, not only through the lives of people, but also through empirical research. From a

grant that we received from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, we found that parents were changing knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

From a 17-year followup study of our participants, we saw changes thereto. While 91 percent of the parents dropped out of school, 60 percent went back to school. These were women on welfare. And half of them were attending college. But, where we saw the greatest gains were in those children under the age of three. Ninety-four percent of them had graduated from high school and about half were attending college.

I have to tell you, I am so happy and proud to introduce to you one of our first Avance graduates and her mother, Isela Flores and Esperanza Segura and her husband. Would you please stand up? I have to acknowledge them.

(Applause.)

DR. RODRIGUEZ: Isela was nine months old when she started Avance. Her mother was 24 years old, as old as Isela is today. However, at that time, Esperanza was a single mother on welfare, living in a housing project with four children. Today, Isela is a college graduate. She is now a schoolteacher, teaching in her former school in the barrios

of San Antonio. And that's where we are seeing the difference, and that Avance is working.

(Applause.)

DR. RODRIGUEZ: Like the Carnegie study, like how it demonstrated, Esperanza learned knowledge in child growth and development which she applied to all of her children, and they all have excelled academically and in sports. In fact, one of her sons, also an Avance baby, was one of eight representing the United States at a track meet in London; and another one excelled in art and just recently got a state award, but Isela is one that already completed her college degrees.

We need to see more success stories like Isela and Esperanza in poor Hispanic communities and in all communities. We need more public-private partnerships to support these kinds of efforts.

Avance is funded by foundations. In fact, we got a large grant from the Kellogg Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation. We get it from corporations, foundations, from the private sector, but also from the Federal Government and the state government and city government.

In fact, 40 percent of our funds come from the

Federal Government, in such programs as Even Start, as Early Head Start. We have a Family Preservation Grant. So, Ms. Shalala, those programs need to be supported and they need to be expanded.

Isela credits her mother as the person that set that foundation, that helped her learn the important values, such as the work ethic, determination, and the love and value of education. We need to replicate programs like Avance all over the United States to set the foundation for school and for life.

The word "Avance" is a Spanish word meaning "to advance and to progress." We need to advance and help families progress. We need children to progress and we need communities, all over America, to advance and to progress.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Gloria, if I could ask you a brief question. I remember meeting with you and hearing about your program years ago in San Antonio, and I've been very impressed with it.

I wonder if you could share some of the things Avance has done to get fathers involved in caring for and

raising their children.

DR. RODRIGUEZ: Since 1988, we have had a fathers program and, just like the mothers program, the fathers are encouraged to participate, to learn about child growth and development, to get actively involved in the development of their children, and to establish that warm relationship that we as mothers have been getting and doing for years.

It has been working. We have been hearing comments from fathers that, for too long, they have been out of the picture and they have missed so much. So not only have we related knowledge in child growth and development, but the research studies that you mentioned, as well as research studies that they have had on girls where the fathers become involved in their development, the children are going to be better in math and science and do better in life.

The program doesn't end just with the relationship between the parent and the child. We also encourage a better relationship between husband and wife, and strengthening the marriage, and we encourage the father to be the breadwinner and the provider by connecting him to adult education courses, as well as job training programs.

DR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much, Gloria.

We also know how important the parent-teacher connection is, and how necessary it is for families to support what goes on in schools. Our next presenter is Sheila Amaning, who is the co-president of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Early Childhood PTA in North Carolina.

She, as an employee of a not-for-profit that provides information to parents on early learning, is committed to enhancing childhood development and sees a great opportunity in doing so by linking this early childhood effort to the pre-school years, to help prepare a child for what comes when he or she walks through the door of the school.

Sheila, could you share with us what you've been doing and what the results have been?

MS. AMANING: Certainly, Mrs. Clinton, Vice President Gore, Mrs. Gore. I would like to say I'm just delighted to be here today. It is, indeed, an honor to be here and even more honor to share my experience with Early Childhood PTA with all of you.

As Mrs. Clinton said, my name is Sheila Amaning, and I am from Charlotte, North Carolina, the wife of Samuel

Amaning, who is in the audience, and he's a native of Ghana, West Africa, and the mother of a very spirited son, Asante; and I am family involvement coordinator with Childcare Resources, which is located in Charlotte.

I feel that involvement in Early Childhood PTA is extremely valuable, as well as beneficial, to parents, because it enhances parental knowledge about the needs and development of pre-schoolers, supports families in their role as parents, assists families in preparing their children for school readiness, and encourages future family and public involvement with the school system.

When my son was two, I attended an Early Childhood PTA workshop on school readiness. After attending the workshop, I was convinced that I absolutely had to become a part of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools' Early Childhood PTA and that I could definitely benefit from being able to meet other parents who shared similar concerns as my own.

As a result of attending this workshop, I was able to better prepare my child in making the transition from pre-school to kindergarten, gained invaluable knowledge, and developed a burning desire to get other parents involved in Early Childhood PTA and to make them aware of ways in which

they could benefit from being a part of the organization.

In an effort to do everything that I could to empower other parents, I became co-president of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools' Early Childhood PTA, which is sponsored by the Charlotte/Mecklenburg school system and chartered by the North Carolina National PTA.

The Early Childhood PTA is open to parents, grandparents, guardians, early childhood caregivers, and others who are responsible for children from birth to school age. Quarterly meetings and/or workshops are held throughout the year at various locations.

Some of the topics include: Ask the Principals, which consists of a roundtable discussion of principals from magnet schools in Mecklenburg County; Getting Started with Early Childhood PTA; Holiday Story Hour; Discipline and Sibling Rivalry; Discipline Without Tears; and The Road to Reading.

Some of the other activities which have been initiated by Early Childhood PTA include conducting Saturday transitional workshops, and this allows parents to attend a half a day of class with their four-year-old to experience being in a kindergarten environment and to get a feel for

activities which take place in the classroom.

We also distribute educational gift packages to parents of newborns in Mecklenburg County hospitals. The packages, we have a pink one for the girls and a blue one for the boys. The contents of the package include a letter from the superintendent of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools, a congratulatory letter from the coordinator of Early Childhood PTA, a certificate of recognition.

I would just like to share with you the six educational booklets which are included in the package, as well. Very colorful, and the parents can use these booklets with their children throughout their school years.

We have: Helping Your Child Develop Skills for Helpful Learning; Helping Your Child Develop Math Skills; Helping Your Child Develop Skills in Science; Helping Your Child with Reading and Writing; Helping Your Child Learn Through the Arts; and Helping Your Child Develop an Interest in Social Studies.

There is also another booklet which we recently started including in this package, and it's called Before the Bell Rings. This was actually written by a kindergarten teacher in Mecklenburg County and the book was recently

reproduced through funds of Smart Start, so this is the finished product.

What it is, it's fun and practical activities to help your child be ready for school, so this pretty much emphasizes activities which parents can do with their child at home, as well as out in the community.

As a result of our outreach efforts with these educational gift packages, we received the Golden Key Award and, last year alone, 13,000 of the gift packages were distributed to hospitals in Mecklenburg County, so we were able to reach 13,000 parents of newborns.

In addition, for our outreach efforts, the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools' Early Childhood PTA has also been recognized for other activities in which they have participated, as well as demonstrating a commitment to the objectives of the PTA by encouraging and strengthening parent involvement and advocacy for children.

As a result of this, we received an award, and it was the National PTA Advocates for Children Award.

I strongly feel that the educational process begins at birth and that, the more parents are empowered to deal with the development and education of their children, the

great opportunities will be for their children. Being a part of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools' Early Childhood PTA has been a truly wonderful experience for me, and I would like to challenge everyone involved in the life of a child to become a member of an Early Childhood PTA chapter.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MRS. GORE: Sheila, if I could just ask you one question.

Because of your involvement with the parents and with the teachers, what have you learned or what has been the most helpful thing to you, as a parent?

MS. AMANING: Well, actually, there are two things. I guess the first thing is the assurance that there are other parents out there who are experiencing some of the same concerns as I experience, and just being able to see that I am not alone and that it is a constant battle, and you have to advocate for the children.

Another thing which I have learned is that there is always opportunity to take advantage of a teachable moment. It's not that you have to take the child out to a fun fair. You can begin at home. You can begin in your kitchen

teaching the child math skills. You can go right outside your back door and take advantage of the opportunity to introduce the child to the environment.

I would say those are two of the most important thing that I've gained.

MRS. GORE: Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: That's great. And, Sheila, I know how proud you are of your husband and your son, so why don't we ask them to stand?

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. I hope this is one of those teachable moment.

(Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: I am so pleased that we could have with us this afternoon a Chief of Police who is interested in prevention and involved in a partnership with the Yale Child Studies Center and other institutions in New Haven, Connecticut, that is aimed at putting into practice through law enforcement the information about development that we have been talking about today.

It's especially significant, since this program is serving as a model for the Department of Justice-funded

program that the President announced this morning.

So I would like very much to hear from Chief Melvin Wearing what this effort is that is going on in New Haven and what have been the results of it in terms of law enforcement and the people in the community you work with. Chief Wearing?

CHIEF WEARING: Thank you very much, Mrs. Clinton, Vice President Gore, Mrs. Gore. Children are our most important resource.

New Haven is the third largest city in the State of Connecticut, has a population of approximately 130,000 people, 51 percent minorities. In 1990, the Police Department began the department-wide transition from traditional policing to community-oriented policing.

Community policing in New Haven integrates police officers within their communities. They are known as individuals, rather than by role. They know the people they serve as individuals, because they interact with them on a daily basis. Citizens now have a voice in how they are policed and they now have unprecedented access to the Department.

We have successfully evolved from a traditional law

enforcement agency responding to crime simply by arresting people, to an organized organization of skilled professionals committed to solving neighborhood problems before they escalate to serious crimes.

Since police officers are actually the last of a dying breed of professionals who make house calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we are in a position to direct people to the resources best suited for their particular problem. The new approach, however, requires a new type of police officer, with special training and special partners.

To this end, we have instituted a number of groundbreaking initiatives, including the Department's partnership with the Yale Child Studies Center. As public servants, the police must look to experts to help us, to give us the resources, and guide us, as we do our job.

The purpose of the Child Development/Community Policing Program is to help children who have been traumatized by violence experienced in their everyday lives and to prevent new generations from becoming involved in this same cycle of violence. As a result of our work together, the program now includes specialized interventions for families involved in domestic violence and for young

perpetrators who are beginning to move from the role of victim to the role of perpetrator.

As applied to officers' daily work, the program involves several components:

First, the seminar on child and adolescent development;

Second, a consultation service where clinicians and specially trained officers are on call 24 hours a day to make and direct contact with families referred by officers;

Third, a clinical fellowship at the Yale Child Studies Center for veteran police officers;

Fourth, a community policing fellowship for clinicians, where they learn basics about police procedures.

they also give them a chance to see streets through the eyes of police officers;

Finally, a weekly program conference, which provides a forum for case discussions, collaborative problem solving, development of monitoring of new approaches and interventions.

An example: Six children, the youngest a toddler of two years, witness a knife stabbing between two men. One was stabbed to death, the other wounded. Clinical and police service went beyond the event. The officers became figure of stability in the

lives of these children as they continued to stop by the house to check on the kids well after the crime had occurred.

In New Haven, we have the same officers working the same beats on a daily basis, and make sure that they interact with residents on a daily basis. Also, police officers sometimes perpetuate violence, when we execute search and seizure warrants, looking for evidence of a crime. Sometimes it's of an illegal nature, and many times there are children in these homes when we enter. We no longer leave those children unattended. We pay attention to them, now. We call in the clinicians to assist and make them aware of what is going on. Police were called to the scene of a double shooting. Two children, ages four-and-a-half to six had awakened and found their parents unresponsive and bloody. They went back to bed and hoped that their parents would wake up soon. After a few hours, the six-year-old dialed 911 and reported that her parents were dead, and she was alone with her baby brother. Police arrived at the scene and did find both parents dead, in an apparent murder-suicide. The Child Development/Community Policing clinicians were immediately paged. In addition to their involvement with the surviving family members, officers and the clinicians

provided information, consultation, and support to the children's school and helped school officials deal with intrusive media. Previously, if a child was the victim of violence, or witnessed a serious act of violence, he or she would not have been considered a victim. They were basically ignored. Today, through the Child Development/Community Policing Program, these children can get the help they so desperately need. Under funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice, Delinquency Prevention, Portland, Oregon; Nashville, Tennessee; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Buffalo, New York are involved in replicating the Child Development/Community Policing Program. Newark, New Jersey and Baltimore, Maryland are among other cities that are introducing the program. In my career, I never thought that I would see police officers and mental health professionals working together as a team. In the past, police officers would essentially fill out a report, fill out the complaint form, and move on to the next case. In the face of the tragedies that officers encounter on a regular basis, how could we expect them to effectively attend to the needs of children and families left behind without new partners, new training, and new resources? How could the

clinicians make their skills and expertise available to those same children and families, if they never ventured beyond the consulting room? Through the Child

Development/Community Policing Program partnership, we no longer work in isolation from each other. We no longer need to turn away from the devastated faces of children who have been traumatized. Together, clinicians and officers are now able to affect the lives of children and families who, in the past, would have been the least likely to receive mental health services and the most likely to experience police as coming too late, altering too little, and leaving too soon.

As a result of this partnership, the police, the mental health professionals and, most importantly, the children, are not alone in the face of violent tragedies. Thank you.

(Applause.) MRS. CLINTON: Chief, if I could ask you, I know that we're seeing very positive results around the country from community policing reducing crime, preventing crime. Do you think that this additional effort, through the Child Development/Community Policing Program, will have an additional effect, or is this something you're doing to try to just take care of the victims? CHIEF

WEARING: I feel that, if we are going to make a difference,

or break the cycle of violence in this country, then we have to deal early on with children. And again, police officers make calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We need to reach out to other agencies, other services, to join in, to save our children.

MRS. CLINTON: There is a program that has been operating for a number of years now, that was started in Chicago, Illinois, called Ounce of Prevention.

It was the brainchild of Irving Harris, who is here with us today, who, along with his son, Bill, who is also here, have been stalwart advocates for the proposition that early intervention and emphasizing early childhood development truly does amount to an ounce of prevention, as opposed to a pound of cure, which is the usual route that we have taken.

Harriet Meyer is the executive director of Ounce of Prevention. I wanted her to describe what Ounce of Prevention is and what it has done, and provide perhaps some suggestions or lessons from their experience in attempting to create an early intervention system. Harriet? MS.

MEYER: Thank you. I want to thank you and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore and the President for hosting this event, and I want to thank you on behalf of my many, many, many colleagues who are out there working across the country,

struggling to put the pieces of the puzzle together in many communities. The Ounce is a public/private partnership between the State of Illinois, the Federal Government, and the private sector, and it invests in the healthy development of infants, children, adolescents, and their families in order to prevent physical, social, and emotional problems later in life. We accomplish our work through an innovative cycle which marries program implementation with research, policy analysis, and advocacy. We chose the name, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, because we believe that it is more caring the cost-effective to promote child development than to treat problems later in life, and we target the first three years of life for all the reasons you heard this morning. This period offers a tremendous opportunity to change the trajectory of a child's life and, while it is not the only moment for intervention, birth to three truly provides all service providers a developmental window of opportunity when we can have the greatest impact. Perhaps the greatest lesson we have learned since our inception is the importance of working in partnership. The Ounce was originally conceived as a partnership 15 years ago when Irving Harris and the Pitway corporation joined forces

with Illinois state government, through its Department of Children and Family Services, to develop a statewide birth-to-three program for teen parents and their babies.

Then, 11 years ago, the Ounce partnered with HHS, our state child welfare agency, and local foundations to develop a comprehensive birth-to-three program in a very low income community in Chicago. Collaborating with a hospital, the Chicago Public Housing Authority, and community organizations like the Chicago Urban League, we now operate one of the nation's first Early Head Start sites. This program reaches more than 100 families and is comprehensive, offering home visiting, health care services, full day child care for children from three months to the age of five, as well as an array of self-sufficiency activities for parents, and we do it all in one place at one site. It is there that we apply theories of research and practice to the design and operation of early childhood programs. Early Head Start really has ushered in a new era in this nation, by focusing on the first three years of life. The funds are non-categorical and provide us with the glue that we need at the community level to fill in the gaps in services to truly meet the needs of families. Early Head Start is the place

the child gets a real head start. It is an opportunity to help a mother have a healthy pregnancy and strengthen family ties.

The program is now flourishing and, as a part of it, we have just established our most exciting partnership with the Chicago public schools to build a brand new child care center that will focus on children from birth to the age of five, and will be located on public school property directly across the street from our Early Head Start program.

So what happens for us, when the rubber hits the road, so to speak, and we apply theory to practice in child care?

Let me tell you about Trevon. At eight months, his grandmother came down and enrolled him in our infant child care program. Trevon's mother, Nikkaa, disaffected and depressed, was 16 at the time, and a senior at the DuSabele High School across the street. She showed very little interest in him, held him on her hip facing backwards when she carried him. At the center, she didn't talk to staff or even say goodbye to her child. Initially, the caregiver in our child care center, Carolyn, held him a lot, because he needed it. He was always crying or, even worse, whimpering. Over time, he began to respond to her care, and she was able to place him between her knees

on the floor and play with him. Little by little, she saw his crying diminish. Nikkaa, the mother, seeing this response, asked the staff for guidance. Carolyn, the caregiver, had begun to build a trusting relationship with Nikkaa, by telling her about Trevon and his day. This started Nikkaa thinking about her child and watching him more, and Carolyn and Nikkaa talked through the child's actions, and Nikkaa began playing with her child, both at the center and at home, with toys that we sent with her. Now, when his mother enters the center, Trevon greets her excitedly, and there is a corresponding smile and a hug.

This story depicts the dance that takes place between a parent and a child. It's a relationship that stimulates the child's growth. It was a caregiver who initially was able to provide what Trevon needed but because she helped the mother develop the same kind of relationship with her child, the mother was able to cut in, and now she also dances with her son. We can all imagine what would have happened, had staff not engaged his mother and him. How can we expect this child to learn from toys and books and mobiles, if all he can do is lay on his stomach and whimper because no one is responding to his need to be talked to, touched, held, and

loved? An infant's cognitive growth occurs through emotional and social interactions. We learned that this morning. Child care and Early Head Start are excellent opportunities to reach children and families at the earliest possible moments in order to lay the foundation that is the basis for their ability to learn in school and to get along with others. We must view child care as more than just a place for children to be when their parents are at work or in school. Developmentally appropriate, high quality child care is literally brain food for the next generation, but good child care must provide caring relationships, knowledgeable caregivers, family connections, and a safe, health environment. The most important assessment tool that we have is our power of observation. Our staff need to be continuously trained and supervised to see with their eyes, but teach with their heart. Dr. Sally Province, the great pioneer of infant development, said, "Don't just do something, stand there." She meant that observing how a parent and child interact is critical to understanding how to reach out and to help them. Sometimes, we need to leave the parent and the child alone. Lastly, relationships matter. Positive, nurturing relationships between staff and

child, staff and parent and, of course, most importantly, and parent and child help the brain to grow, and it is only through these relationships that children change and develop and build a sense of cooperation, self-confidence, and a concept of what is expected and what it takes to feel right in the world. Thank you. (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much, Harriet. I wanted to ask you, if you could, to speak a little bit about another aspect of Ounce of Prevention, and that is home visits. What are the advantages of home visiting, and how does that get carried out through your program? MS. MEYER: Voluntary home visiting offers us, I think, a unique opportunity to enter the life of a parent just at that moment when a parent is most open to receiving information, creating a new relationship, and receiving support. The reason we visit them in the home is because that's where parents are. Especially after they give birth, they are usually involved, bound to the home, with more of the more intimate functions of parenting, which are, in fact, very personalized. They include feeding and nursing and bathing and changing and diapering. Those aren't activities that feel comfortable taking place in a large classroom, as an example. It's a

wonderful way for us to break down the isolation that every parent feels when you're presented with this bundle of joy on the first day, but particularly for our most vulnerable parents. It offers us a great time to not only build the relationship, but make the connection for them as a front door to other community services that are available to them.

MRS. CLINTON: I am very strongly in favor of home visiting, for just all of those reasons, because I think that it could help build relationships, do the kind of modeling that Dr. Brazelton and others talked about this morning, and create a relationship of trust between a parent and a responsible adult, which may be the only way to build up the confidence of that parent over time. I think that the more we can consider ways of providing that home visitor function, the more likely we are to actually see the changes that would benefit parents and children. We are all looking forward to the wonderful production that Rob Reiner and his wife and others have been working on to bring to broad public attention the information about brain development and also some of the solutions about what is working around the country. Rob has taken this effort on as a crusade, and those of us who have watched his energy

being spent on this are very grateful that he has, because what he has done is to bring together not only the resources for a television program, but for a campaign called I Am Your Child. It will call upon the talents and resources of entertainment leaders, corporations, early childhood experts, community leaders, business leaders, and on and on and on.

Rob, if you will, give us maybe a preview but, more than that, what comes after, as well as what you hope to see develop from this? MR. REINER: Thank you. First of all, I just want to say I am so thrilled to be here today with the First Lady and Vice President Gore and Tipper Gore and the President this morning. It is so thrilling for me, because we have been working so hard, everybody in this room, for a long, long, long time, and we have now finally put the issue of early childhood development in front center, where it belongs. It is the single most important issue facing American today. (Applause.)

MR. REINER: We have spent the last 50 years since the Second World War strengthening our country, from trying to build democracy and fight communism. We know communism is virtually eliminated now, and now we have to look inward. If we are going to strengthen this country in the future, we must look inward,

and the way to look inward is to strengthen the family, and the way to strengthen the family is to strengthen the relationships between parents and children in the first three years of life. Wonderfully, we have new brain science.

We have scientific research which is pointing us in the right direction and telling us what to do. I want to say, if we are going to adopt a slogan, "It's the brain, stupid."

(Laughter.) MR. REINER: Ultimately, that's what it comes down to. If we want to have a real significant impact, not only on children's success in school and, later on in life, healthy relationships, but also an impact on reduction in crime, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, child abuse, welfare, homelessness, and a variety of other societal ills, we are going to have to address the first three years of life.

There is no getting around it. All roads point to Rome.

It's very simple. We know what the problems are, and we were talking about it this morning in this morning's panel, and we know what the solutions are. That's the kind of frustrating thing for everybody in this room. There are people in this room that have been wrestling with these problems for 15, 20, 25 years, and we have the solutions.

My job, my job is to take this information and

disseminate it to the public, because we have to create a public will. Once we create a public will, there is a wave that is inescapable, there is a critical mass that is unavoidable. And, when that critical mass happens, we will get the country to change their way of thinking and look through the prism of zero to three in terms of problem solving on every level of society. I talk about, you know, building a coalition and building up a head of steam. And I want to thank Tipper Gore, especially, because -- yes, Tipper, wake up, you're down there. (Laughter.)

MR. REINER: I have been thinking about this issue for 20 years, now. I don't come as a Johnny-come-lately here. I've been thinking about it for a long time. I came to my own realizations through my own analysis, and determined that what happened to me, in my first two or three years of life, was critical in terms of how I functioned later on as an adult, good and bad, and I knew that that realization was not unique to me, that this was something that everyone experienced. But, at that time, I didn't know about the brain science. I think the brain science was just breaking, but I was certainly not aware of it. Then, as I became more successful and had a power base and had the

ability to reach out to the powers that be, I started searching, because I knew that this was the answer. I knew this was the answer, but how did I get this information out?

So I started reaching out, and the first person I called was Tipper Gore. I had read, like everybody else, that she was interested in mental health issues. I knew she cared deeply about that. And I picked up a telephone and I called her, and she answered the telephone; and I said, "I want to come and talk to you, because I want to know what I can do. What can we do to put this on the front burner and make everybody aware of how critical this is?" I went to Washington, with my wife, Michelle, who is sitting right there, and we met with Tipper at her house, and there were a couple of members of the Department of Education, I think, there at that time. The Clintons' Goals 2000 had just been released at that time. I looked at the goals. And, of course, everybody knows the first goal is, every child must enter school with a readiness to learn. And I said, "Hmm. If we can meet that goal, we don't have to worry about the rest of these goals. They will take care of themselves." And I believe they will. So, again, all roads lead to Rome. I mean, if we can get our children ready to learn as

they enter school, they will learn. They will be good students and they will reach their full potential.

So my job is to get the word out. I went back to California and I met Ellen Gilbert and we started reaching out to every member of the society. We talked to people from the Governor's Office in Vermont, from the Vice President's office, Mayor Riordan came to the house, and we started talking -- "What can we do?" I realize that there is no stomach here for a federally funded program and, also, there is no one size fits all. We certainly can observe that from what we hear today. There are a lot of ways to "skin the cat" and there are lots of needs from the various communities. So I said, "And, by the way, we don't want a one size fits all." It has to be from a grassroots level. It has to be community basis. I do feel there is a federal component to this, because I do feel there has to be a national imprimatur on all of this, even regardless of how large or small that component is, and that can be worked out by the policy makers, but there needs to be done. "But," I said, "I don't do that. I don't create programs. I create television programs, not social programs." So what I do is, I know how to put on a show, and that's what I decided to do.

I'm went to ABC and I said, "Give me an hour. Give me one hour. I'm now in a position where I've done enough in my community where you must give me an hour to talk about this.

And they were kind enough. By the way, before I get into this, Mr. Langbo, what cereal are we going to be on here? Is it going to be Frosted Flakes or Special K?

Because Special K is going to penetrate a lot more deeply than Frosted Flakes.

(Laughter.)

MR. REINER:

I watched that Special K with that guy, you know, Covert Bailey or something. But he's kind of fat. He doesn't lose weight. I don't know why.

MR. LANGBO: It can be any cereal that you would like it to be.

(Laughter.)

MR. REINER: Ones that adults eat, you know. Don't put it on a sugary cereal. Anyway, no, it's terrific. It's terrific what you're doing. It's absolutely terrific what you're doing. Anyway, I went to ABC, and I said, "Give me an hour. Give me an hour and I will put on a show, and I will get you some people to be on the show so that it will not be a dry documentary, it will not be an NBC White Paper. It's ABC, first of all, so it couldn't be an NBC White Paper.

(Laughter.)

MR. REINER: And I said, "I will get some people into the tent for you." And they said,

"Well, who will you get?" I said, "I'll get you Tom Hanks."

And I went and I got Tom. He was the first person I went to. I got Tom Hanks. That opened the door, because now we've got somebody who says, "Okay, I'm standing up for this."

Then, it was easy. I went to Robin Williams, I went to Billy Crystal, I went to Rosie O'Donnell, to Roseanne, to Oprah Winfrey. I went to General Colin Powell. And, when I had all those people lined up, I said, "Maybe I can get the President and the First Lady to come on." And they agreed to do it, and they're terrific in the show. They're absolutely wonderful.

So we've got this wonderful forum, where we hope people will tune in. Now, we also are disseminating information, as well. There's going to be a lot of information about the new research in brain development.

Barry Brazelton is on the show, Dr. Bruce Perry, C. Everett Koop.

We will also examine the town of Hampton, Virginia and what they are doing, in terms of early childhood development. It was a community at risk. They were facing economic collapse, and they decided to adopt an Ounce of Prevention preventative approach, and develop some early childhood development programs as a way of uplifting the community.

They have done that, and they have been

very, very successful, so we are highlighting them, as well.

It was one thing to put together a television show and get it out to the public and have this discussed. But, like so many things that you put front and center, unless there is some followup, unless there is a public engagement component to it, it evaporates into the ether. We all know what happens when we all get together. We're of like mind. We talk about a lot of things, and then it disappears. So, to that end, we put together quite a coalition. We started reaching out. We went to Johnson & Johnson and we asked them if they would help fund a video, which they are doing and which will be made available at the end of May, a parenting video. We went to IBM and asked them if they would help us fund a website, which they agreed to do -- www.Iamyourchild.org, which is our website. We went to AT&T and we said, "Would you agree to give us a toll-free number where we could disseminate some fulfillment materials?" They agree to do that. It's 1-888-447-3400 which, if you call, you can get either a parenting brochure called The First Years Last Forever or a brochure which I think is ultimately going to be much more important, which is a community mobilization brochure. It tells people what they

can do in their communities to mobilize around this issue.

The Avance program that was spoken of earlier by Ms. Rodriguez is talked about in the brochure, parents as teachers, a number of other programs, really good programs around the country are mentioned, along with the Healthy Families America and what they are doing to help communities mobilize. So we've done all that and, on top of it, we've reached out to the National Governors Association. Governor Miller, who is the chairman and Governor Voinovich from Ohio, who is the vice chair, have agreed to meet with us and agreed to put this issue on the front burner as part of their agenda, as the Governors' agenda. I spoke at the last NGA meeting in the winter here in Washington, and it was discussed. They put together a six-Governor task force, bipartisan -- three Republicans and three Democrats -- and the issue of early childhood will be passed on to Governor Voinovich and I'm sure Governor Miller will speak more about that. Newsweek Magazine, yes. Rick Smith, are you here, sir? Yes. There is Rick Smith. We called Newsweek up. Recently, you might have seen -- Rick, don't get mad at me -- recently, you've seen the report on Time Magazine about the brain. But Newsweek was on this issue six to eight

months before Time magazine. They were the first national publication to really get on the issue of brain development.

We called them up and said, "we're going to do this campaign. Would you like to be an ally to us?" And they immediately said yes. They went ahead and put together a special edition which is going to hit the stands April 24th. It's a sensational issue. Those of you who have had preview copies of it, it covers just about everything that we've been discussing today, and it was funded by Johnson & Johnson, fully funded. They have been unbelievable for us. So we are doing all of these things. It was mentioned earlier today about a CEO summit, Kaiser Permanente putting on a CEO summit. We are going to be the co-hosts of that summit. We are going to help them throw some media spotlight on that to see what businesses can do around the country.

Like I said, I'm not a Johnny-come-lately, and I'm not a Johnny-leave-early. I guess I just made that up. I'm in for the long haul, here. I'm in for the long haul.

(Applause.) MR. REINER: So we are going to continue. The Reiner Foundation is going to continue with a media office in Los Angeles, which we're going to start ramping up to support all the organizations that have been pulled

together by the Families at Work Institute, the Carnegie Corporation, the Heinz Foundation, all the people that we've been working with, to help them get messages out. You know, this brain information has been around for 15 years, but we need to get it out and we need to continue to get it out and keep the drumbeat going. I believe it's going to be the central issue in the future elections. I think it is the single issue to strengthen our country, and that's all we're doing. And I'm so thrilled to be here, I can't tell you how thrilling this is. (Applause.) THE

VICE PRESIDENT: Wow. That was fabulous. I just want to say, Rob, that ever since Tipper specialized in this issue in graduate school, I've heard her lectures on zero to three and child development, but I can tell you that I don't think she has ever had a response to one of her little talks like this.

MR. REINER: It was interesting, because I came to your house, and I said, "This is what I think. You know, I think that what happens to a child in the first couple of years of life is the critical time period in determining how that child is going to function later on in society." And she says, "Oh, you're talking about zero to three." I said, "I am?" I didn't even know there was a thing -- I

didn't even know there was a thing called zero to three, but apparently I was on the same wavelength.

THE VICE

PRESIDENT: Let me ask you a question about the entertainment media. You have talked about enlisting all these great folks who can command the attention of the public, and they're parents, they care, and they're helping you, and it's absolutely wonderful.

What about the media's responsibility in the entertainment they provide? How do you see that?

MR. REINER: Well, there obviously is a tremendous responsibility. I mean, there's a lot that the media can do and we will do. One of the things that I'm going to work very hard on in the next couple of months is there is an organization called the Civitas Initiative, which was started by a fellow named Jeff Jacobs, who is the executive producer of the Oprah Winfrey Show. He runs all of her Harpo Productions. He is working very closely with Dr. Bruce Perry, who many people in this room are familiar with down at the Baylor College of Medicine, and they are working on trying to find a model, a working kind of biosphere model, to integrate all of the child protective services into one area so it can be disseminated to communities on an at-need basis, and also to have an ongoing

research component connected to it so that we will have enough data to be able to continue doing these programs.

One of the problems we have and one of the things I left out is that we are also funding a Rand Corporation study, a cost/benefit analysis of the programs that are working and, as many of the people in this room know, the problem we are having is that there are not longitudinal studies, there are not longitudinal cost/benefit studies to prove to people that this is cost effective. We know it is. We all in this room know it is. And Bruce Perry has often said, you know, "How many times do you have to drop an apple from a tree to know that there is such a thing as gravity." I mean we know it exists. But it is certainly nice to have the good hard data to back it up. We've got the science. The science is in place. We have got to get the economics in place. Once those two things are locked in place, it is immutable. This thing cannot go away. We will pursue it. But to that end, to go back around, you know, Oprah Winfrey is on the board of the Civitas Initiative. And the one thing I am going to try to do, you know, it is enough for me to be a front for the media in this and I'm, you know, I'm not unattractive.

(Laughter.)

MR. REINER: But Oprah Winfrey really is attractive, you know. And if I can convince Oprah Winfrey to be a spokesperson for this issue, I think that is probably the biggest thing we are going to be able to do.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You're doing pretty well, Rob.

(Laughter.)

MR. REINER: I know. But, you know, I am not as pretty as Oprah.

(Laughter.)

MR. REINER: You know? And I can't sell books the way she does.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I just wanted to add one other thing I'll say to the First Lady. Mr. Langbo, you look like you wanted to answer Rob's question.

(Laughter.)

MR. LANGBO: Rice Krispies.

(Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Fat free. Fat free. Right? Rice Krispies is fat free.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, my goodness. You know, one of the sweetest things I've seen, Rob, in the last couple of

weeks, is your father going around promoting his new movie with Bette Midler, spending half his time promoting your program. So, I mean it is becoming a generational commitment here.

I wanted to follow up on one thing that Rob said at the very end because I think it is something we should pay special attention to when he was talking about the Civitas Initiative and the work with Dr. Perry and others. I think it is important that we do have some sense of priorities in terms of the challenges that families face. And, certainly, children in foster care, children in abusive situations, children who are most vulnerable should be our first priority because oftentimes they will not have the kind of help and their parents won't know where to turn, and those are the populations the hardest to reach.

So, we have got to use every means at our disposal to try to reach into those communities and to make the case that all of us on this panel are making about the importance of early intervention.

Now, there are some very difficult challenges that people like Gloria Rodriguez and others deal with on a daily basis in trying to deliver these messages. What works for my

family might not work for one of Gloria's clients or one of Kellogg's employees and we have got to be very sensitive about how we not only deliver the primary message, but then deliver all these sub-messages to different populations. And I hope that many of you who are here with us today will really give all of us advice about how best to do that.

There's another group of people that I am particularly concerned about. Dr. Cohen mentioned them this morning. You know, and that is the parents of children who have some kind of disability, who have some sort of congenital condition, who have some kind of illness in the early months and years that leaves them with some kind of difficulty that has to be dealt with, whether it is autism or cerebral palsy or Down's Syndrome, whatever it might be. Because if we only talk about the brain as being something that can be stimulated to create all these learning opportunities, that will make the task of parenting a child with disabilities even more painful for many of these families. And we have got to be sensitive to that and talk about, you know, maximizing the potential of every child and using this information as a means for enhancing parenting, not pointing fingers or making people feel more anxious than

they already do in whatever situation they find themselves. So, there is a lot to be thought about as we try to consider how do we deliver these messages. Who are the advocates, the champions, the spokesmen and women who are best positioned to speak to different populations so that the information not only is delivered, but is heard and acted on.

There is also another element that I think we have to give some thought to and that is there are behaviors that parents adopt for realistic reasons that, again, we were talking about briefly after the session this morning. If you live in a dangerous neighborhood in any of our inner cities, one of your primary goals is to keep your child alive. And one of the ways you do that is by conveying a lot of warnings which come across as negative reinforcement to your child.

If any of you have, as I have, worked in settings where you are involved with a lot of families who come from difficult neighborhoods, from the kind of communities that the chief was talking about where, you know, there is violence that a child might see on a regular basis, you, I am sure, have seen a lot of the parenting techniques that have been adopted where children are told not to do something, stay away from there, don't do that, get back here. All of

that kind of parental language which is aimed at protecting a child, but which has the effect, we know, of sending a very different message.

And, so, we have to be very thoughtful about how do we talk to parents who are most at risk? How do we enlist people such as those that Harriet Meyer works with or Sheila and others, how do we enlist the experts, the parents and the people who work with the parents, themselves?

So, as we think about this and as we review programs that we hope will work, I hope all of you will lend your expertise. Gloria wrote me a note saying that, you know, one of the things that her program does is to have toy making sessions where in the course of making the toys, a lot of lessons can be taught to children. And there are just lots of ways that we have to be more creative.

Well, the people who are really in the public arena on the front lines of this are governors who have such major responsibilities for education and child care and, now, a lot more responsibility for welfare and many of the other functions that historically were the province of the federal government, have now been handed over in all or part to the states. And that poses both great opportunities for the

states, but also some very significant challenges.

I would commend to any of you who is interested in how one governor sees these challenges to read Governor Chiles' State of the State Address which he delivered a few weeks ago in which he talks about his now I think 34-year career in public service, and how it goes along with what Rob was saying, after all of the years he spent in the Senate, 18 years, chaired the Budget Committee, his second term as governor of one of our most populous states, what he has concluded is that there isn't anything more important than what happens with children. And that is not what he thought when he started in public life or when he held many of these important positions, but it is what he knows now.

And I hope the message that Governor Chiles gave to his state legislature will be echoed in many other State Houses and in our Congress. And, certainly, the governors are attempting to make this issue a front burner issue. And I would like, now, to turn to Governor Bob Miller, the Governor of Nevada, Chair of the National Governors Association, Co-Chair of the Association's Children's Task Force, to talk about what the states are doing and the challenges that the states are attempting to meet and to give

us some insight about where the governors are going with this issue.

Governor Miller?

GOVERNOR MILLER: Thank you, Ms. Clinton, Mr. Vice President and Ms. Gore. And on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to thank all of you and the President for leading this country on issues of parenting and families, both by example and by action.

I think all of us in life learn from experiences and perhaps focus our own actions based on those. I know when our first two children were born, my wife and I were fortunate to be living near her parents and both of her sisters and many lifelong friends who provided the support network.

Some twelve years later when our third daughter, third child was born, not only did we establish that we had flunked Planned Parenthood, but we also had two teenage siblings that were providing part of that support network. They interacted extensively with her. And recalling Dr. Brazleton's example earlier this morning, they decided that the appropriate response for their young sister was, in fact, (noise).

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MILLER: The cue, the cue that they chose, interestingly, was my political opponent's name.

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MILLER: Which interrupted a great many interviews on Election Night several years ago as two teenagers nearby were howling in appreciation for their sister. But, unlike my experience, which is in this day and age the exception, families are much more mobile. They infrequently live near their parents and their siblings. In many instances, both parents work; in others, there is but one parent. The challenges for raising children are much more intense than they were just a generation ago, but the desire is just as strong to be a good parent as it was for our parents or it is for any of us.

We have heard today extensively the analysis of this situation and concern and recognition by the private sector and the action that they have taken. And, so, I suspect that that would turn to me as to what role should government play?

And government should play a role. Our role needs to be defined and refined. This year as Chairman of the

National Governors Association, I have chosen as my initiative to work on 0 to 3 working with I Am Your Child, receiving a dull unimpassioned plea from Mr. Reiner as we have heard earlier today that made that decision a very easy one to make. But also to be able to analyze and evaluate what is going on in states and local communities in terms of recognition of the importance of these first three years and to build and learn from each other in a coordinated effort.

In my own State of Nevada a couple of years ago, we created family resource centers in each little pockets of communities and allowed the neighborhood to decide how they would use the coordinated federal, state and local resources all in that facility and establish their own priorities. In this session, we are trying to expand into a family-to-family connection in which with, again, the private sector's involvement, we would bring in through churches and civic groups and businesses trained volunteers into a hospital setting at the time of birthing and provide some guidance and assistance and then on a voluntary basis go to houses to follow up thereon and see what assistance we can provide in being that extended family network. Government should not replace parenting or families but can be an adjunct thereto.

Programs like this have existed in Vermont and Hawaii, Minnesota, and Kansas, already. And in Hawaii, for example, the incidence of repeat child abuse dropped from 62 percent to 3.3 percent. We have seen in Missouri and Alaska efforts to provide public information on this critical topic. You have heard at lunch and, again, a moment ago in the introduction of the extensive work that Governor Chiles has put forward in Florida, we have seen similar programs in Colorado. And I think our challenge as elected officials is to work together at all levels of government. The federal government can and should have a role. They already provide funding for many of the programs that we have heard about today, but there isn't a coordinated effort.

Perhaps the federal government can and should look into pilot projects that we can build upon as we determine how best to approach this problem.

State governments should have a role, not just in working with the federal government, but on their own. We're putting several million dollars into the family, the family concept that I've put forth in the State of Nevada. And I think more can and should be invested in future years. We should also coordinate with local government.

I believe that all of us working together and through the recognition of the importance of these first three years which is now just coming on to the front as far as public awareness can establish a next generation which will be much more trouble free than the generation that we deal with day in and day out. And I, again, appreciate on behalf of my colleagues the opportunity to be here and to learn more and more about just how important this issue is. And as many speakers have said, this is the most important issue facing the future of our country. Thank you.

(Applause.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you for asking me. It did provoke one thought because what you talked about, Governor Miller, in the description of what has happened in this family-to-family program, with the effects on the whole family of the reinvolvement with the child, 0 to 3, is similar to what Harriet Meyer told us about in the dance between the mother and child and how a mother changes her behavior after the engagement with the child, if the behavior is modeled or if in some other way she learns the importance of this involvement.

I just wanted to add one other piece to this puzzle

from the research done on fathers. There is a national program called "Father-to-Father" and a lot of the findings demonstrate that the deep involvement of a father in the life of his infant child can and often does have a powerful transforming effect on that man, so that behaviors change, the whole pattern of life changes. It can lead to a rededication to the mother of that child and some of the Father-to-Father programs in inner cities and distressed areas where there are lawbreakers, gang members, young men who have not considered marrying the mother of their child or their children, are themselves really changed dramatically. So, it is just another piece of the whole puzzle that illustrates, I think, the powerful result for our society that can come when we look through the lens the First Lady has put before us here, to look at what happens in the developing brain of a young child when the right approach is taken and it effects everything: the child's future, the family's future and present and, obviously, the whole society.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that was a wonderful way to end this remarkable day. I want to thank everyone who participated in the panels this morning and this afternoon.

I want to thank all of you who were here as members of the audience, both here in the East Room and in the Old Executive Office Building and out around the country.

When Rob was talking about his commitment to these issues of 20, 25 years, I couldn't help but look out and see Bernice and Barry and Ed Zigler and think it's about 50 or 60 years for some of the people in this audience. (Laughter.) And we are grateful for that pioneering commitment and work that you have brought to this issue. And we are finally catching up to what you have been advocating for a very long time.

Now it's time for us to leave this table and consider all of the ways that each of us can carry on the mission of enhancing the development of our children. Many of you are on the front lines doing that every day. On this panel, we have Harriet Meyer, and we have Sheila Amaning, and we have Chief Wearing, and we have Gloria Rodriguez who are out there day in and day out working with children and families. And those are the people that the rest of us have to support because, for all of the concern and caring that we may bring to this issue, it is these people and the people they work with who will actually be in those homes putting

together those programs, making those connections.

And we also, I think, are blessed to have with us today business leaders like Mr. Langbo who understand that there really isn't any more important bottom line than what we do as parents of our own children and what we do as citizens of our society to enhance the potential of all children as future citizens and as future employees. And that kind of enlightened leadership and enlightened self-interest is critical to how we see the next steps in this effort to bring attention to this important set of issues, and then to act on what we now know.

We're also blessed to have public officials here, starting with the Vice President and Mrs. Gore and Governor Miller and Governor Chiles, and we have members of Congress and members of the Cabinet who also appreciate the significance of this new information. And I hope that we will be able to think of good arguments and effective ways of communicating why this is important and why it should go far beyond partisan politics and become an American issue, not an issue of any political party or ideology, as to how we try to enhance the raising of our children.

And then we have members of the media who we are

all reliant upon to convey this information not just for a week, not just for one show, but as Rob has eloquently expressed, to really make it an ongoing commitment. I said this morning that there are people in the world who ask, how are the children, and all of us, I hope, will begin asking that as well, because we have so many opportunities now. As Governor Chiles said at lunch, the information and research that science is giving us provides a hook that we have not had before. And it is up to us to figure out ways of using that in our respective positions.

I hope that this conference has laid the groundwork for all of us coming together to be more committed and more effective in that commitment on behalf of American children. I thank all of you for being part of what I hope will be looked back on as a part of a historic moment that involves the research that has been done, the dissemination and communication of it, and then the follow-up. And I thank you all and invite you to join us and others who will be arriving at a reception in the tent in the back yard. And, really, I hope you will go away from this event at the White House as inspired and fired up as Rob Reiner is. (Laughter.)

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

END

4:59 P.M. EDT