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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
PRESCRIPTION FOR READING ANNOUNCEMENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
APRIL 16, 1997

I am delighted to welcome each of you to the White House. Today, I am pleased to announce the Prescription for Reading Partnership, a new national effort which we believe will make an important difference in the lives of children and families all across our country. Through this partnership, pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers, libraries and literacy organizations, many of whom are represented in this room, have pledged to work together to encourage and enable more parents across our country read to their children regularly.

As many of you know, this is a crucial task. New research has shown that talking and reading to infants and toddlers is vital to their neurological, intellectual, and emotional development. Time spent sharing a favorite book with a child -- even a newborn -- strengthens the bond between a parent and child, prepares him or her for reading, and literally helps a baby's brain grow.

Unfortunately, too many children are still missing this early stimulation. Over the years I have heard parents -- parents who clearly want to do everything they can for their children -- tell me they never really talked to their babies because they thought the infants were too young to understand what they were saying. I've met parents who believed that they could not read well enough to read a book to a child.

We have to help parents understand that, no matter their educational level or reading ability, they can stimulate their children's emotional and intellectual growth by talking to and reading to their children, even when they stumble over a few words here or there. Most likely, their children won't even notice. But they *will* notice the power of reading and books to take them on fascinating adventures and introduce them to interesting ideas.

Today's initiative was inspired by the national Reach Out and Read program and the American Library Association's Born to Read program. Both efforts recognized the vital role the medical community could play in encouraging parents to read to their infants and toddlers. Doctors are often the first professionals our children see on a regular basis. While parents may not take a child to a library or a preschool program until he or she is three, they will most likely take a child to a doctor or a nurse for vaccinations and checkups. These regular visits present medical professionals with important opportunities to instill good reading and learning habits -- along with good health habits -- in parents and children.

So it makes sense for our doctors and health professionals to use their authority and influence -- yes, those white uniforms and stethoscopes -- to "prescribe" daily reading to young patients and their parents during every visit. Research has shown that these prescriptions are followed: Parents and children who are given books by their doctors are more likely to read

aloud at home.

When I first heard about these efforts to "prescribe" reading and provide books to low-income families, I was very impressed. I realized that it was an idea that could easily be brought to many more children and parents in communities all across our country. So I wrote about it in my book and in Time magazine, talked about it in visits to hospitals, and, earlier this year, invited representatives from the health, library and publishing communities to come to the White House to discuss ways to make this a truly national effort.

The national Prescription for Reading Partnership is the result of these discussions. With the leadership of Reach Out and Read, Scholastic, Inc. and First Book, as well as the hard work of so many others represented here, we have built a diverse coalition of organizations who have pledged to make this idea a reality in doctors' offices, hospitals and health clinics across the country.

These commitments come from the worlds of publishing, medicine, health, and even, television. And I'd like to take a few moments to highlight some of them:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics will formally recommend to its 53,000 members that they make prescribing reading part of standard pediatric care and well-child visits. They have also agreed to provide their members with specially-designed reading prescription pads -- slightly smaller versions of the one in this room.
- The Reach Out and Read National Training Center at Boston Medical Center will train 10,000 pediatricians and pediatric residents by the year 2000 to implement the program in their communities. Under the Reach Out and Read program, volunteers read to children in waiting rooms while health care providers prescribe reading, use books in well-child exams, and give books to children at the end of each visit.
- The National Association of Community Health Centers' 950 members will implement Reach Out and Read programs in centers serving a total of one million parents and children by the year 2000. In a similar effort, the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions will challenge its members to triple the number of hospitals using Reach Out And Read.
- Scholastic, Inc., has promised to contribute 100,000 new books to health care professionals and clinics participating in the Reach Out and Read or the Born to Read programs. Scholastic's pledge is part of its already-announced commitment to provide one million books to the President's America Reads challenge. The company has also promised to match new donations to the Partnership with additional books.
- In addition to working tirelessly to bring all of today's groups together, First Book, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing disadvantaged children with their own

books, has also donated 100,000 books to the effort.

- Another publishing company, Random House, will contribute 5,000 books a month for twelve months to Reach Out and Read
- The American Library Association will work with the nation's 16,000 public libraries to establish Born to Read programs with health professionals in their communities. And let me add my own call to our country's health clinics and libraries to work together to make sure every child has books to read and people to read to them.
- The National Association of Chain Drug Stores and the National Community Pharmacists Association will distribute reading tips and suggested book titles to parents who visit their pharmacies.
- I'd also like to thank the Association of American Publishers, The American Booksellers Association, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Irving Harris and the Harris Foundation of Chicago, Mellon Trust, the Dreyfus Corporation, Reading Is Fundamental and ABC Television for their individual commitments to the Partnership.

These commitments are just the beginning. I have no doubt the Partnership, which seems to be growing everyday, will also help our children grow and develop their full potential to learn, to feel, to communicate and relate to others. It will also bring us a giant step closer to answering the President's America Reads challenge to make sure that every child can read independently by the end of third grade. Early reading at home, in the comfort of a parent's lap, is some of the most important preparation a child can have for reading in school. That's why the President has made the Parents as First Teachers Grants a vital part of the America Reads Challenge proposal.

But let's remember that it won't take just parents, but all of us to make sure every child reaches his or her full potential. I thank all of you for recognizing the important roles you could play in bringing books into more homes, preparing children for the future and serving your communities.

Tomorrow, leading neuroscientists, pediatricians, child development specialists, child care providers, business and religious leaders from across the country will be gathering here to discuss the new and exciting scientific discoveries about the brain and early childhood development. One of the primary goals of the White House Conference is to find ways to put the research to practical use, and to call upon all sectors of society to make sure our children benefit from this new knowledge. I believe that the Prescription for Reading Partnership is one of the best answers to that call. It is a wonderful way to begin our conference.

Now I'd like to introduce Dr. Robert Hanneman, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON'S LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- 1970 Worked on issues affecting families of migrant laborers through the Washington Research Project (Children's Defense Fund).
- 1972 - 1973 As a legal researcher at the Carnegie Council on Children, studied children's rights to health care and education.
- 1973 Graduated from Yale Law School, after extending her law studies to include a fourth year to study child development and other children's issues while working at the Yale Child Study Center in New Haven.
- 1973 - 1974 Worked on a range of legal issues concerning children as a staff attorney at the Children's Defense Fund.
- 1974 Wrote about the legal rights of children in a landmark article for the *Harvard Education Review*, entitled "Children Under the Law."
- 1974 - 1976 Joined the law faculty at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where she directed the University of Arkansas Legal Aid Clinic, helping families who could not afford legal representation.
- 1977 Founded Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, an advocacy group that addresses the needs of children in that state (president 1977 - 1984).
- 1977 Authored a handbook on the legal rights of Arkansas women.
- 1978 - 1980 As chair of the Legal Services Corporation, worked to improve and expand legal service organizations around the country (board member 1977 - 1981).
- 1979 - 1980 Recommended new ways to deliver medical services to families living in isolated areas of Arkansas, as chair of the Arkansas Rural Health Committee.
- 1983 - 1984 Led the effort to reform Arkansas' public schools, as chair of the Arkansas Education Standards Committee. Mrs. Clinton held public meetings throughout the state, testified before the state legislature, and worked with educators, parents, policy makers

and others to reform the state public school system, by raising academic standards, decreasing class sizes, and improving the performance and salaries of teachers.

- 1984 - 1985 Recommended ways to meet the health needs of the region's youngest children while serving on the Southern Governors Association Task Force on Infant Mortality.
- 1984 - 1992 Served on the Commission on Quality Education, Southern Regional Education Board.
- 1986 Brought the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) to Arkansas. The program helps low-income parents prepare their children for school by teaching them basic learning skills at home.
- 1986 - 1991 As chair of the Children's Defense Fund Board of Directors, led the organization's efforts on a range of national issues affecting children (board member 1976 - 1992).
- 1986 - 1992 Worked to improve the quality of child care in America, as a member of the Child Care Action Campaign Board of Directors.
- 1986 - 1988 Served on the W.T. Grant Foundation's Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, which produced a report entitled, "The Forgotten Half," on school-to-work transitions for non-college bound youth.
- 1987 - 1992 Served on the Board of Directors of the National Center on Education and the Economy, a non-profit organization that works to improve American education, employment and training.
- 1988 - 1992 Worked to upgrade and improve the delivery of health care services at the Arkansas Children's Hospital, while serving on the hospital's Board of Directors. Chaired the Annual Telethon to raise money for the hospital from 1983 - 1992.
- 1988 - 1992 Served on the Board of Directors of:
- "I Have a Dream" Foundation (1988 - 89)
 - New Futures for Little Rock Youth (1988 - 92)
 - HIPPY USA Advisory Board (1988 - 92)
- 1989 - 1992 As a member of the Children's Television Workshop Board of Directors, worked to improve the quality of children's television programming.

1990 - 1992	President of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund Program.
May 1991	Testified before the Senate Labor and Human Resources committee on education issues affecting young people.
1991- 1992	As a member of the Arkansas Business and Education Alliance worked to improve public education in the state.
1993 -	As First Lady, she has been a consistent voice for children and families here and around the world, on issues ranging from health care, education, adoption, child care, family empowerment and community building. As an advocate for the importance of public education, she as traveled around the country highlighting innovative approaches, such as charter schools, and the President's education standards initiative.
December 1994	Hosted a symposium, "Children of the Americas" in conjunction with the President's Summit of the Americas in Miami, to discuss with the other First Ladies of the Americas effective strategies for improving the health and education of children. Follow-up meetings have since been convened in Latin America in 1995 and 1996.
January 1996	Published <i>It Takes A Village</i> , in which she shares views developed over a lifetime as an advocate for children and families.
April 1996	Launched President's Council on the Arts and Humanities report <i>Coming Up Taller</i> on arts programs around the country geared to at-risk youth.
May 1996	Convened children's conferences in Kansas City, MO and Denver, CO to explore ways that families, civic and religious institutions, businesses, media and government can come together to strengthen families.
July 1996	Participated in White House conference on television ratings, and joined the President in a round table discussion aimed at providing parents with a rating system to help monitor the television programs children watch.
January 1997	Joined with representatives from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Booksellers Association, the "Read Out and Read" program and renowned children's author Maurice Sendak to highlight the importance of reading to children's early development and urged physicians to "prescribe" reading to young children in Washington, DC and Kansas City, MO. Brought pertinent parties together in Washington, DC for a major announcement on prescribing reading.

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICA'S YOUNGEST CHILDREN

"Learning begins in the first days of life. Scientists are now discovering how young children develop emotionally and intellectually from their very first days, and how important it is for parents to begin immediately talking, singing, even reading to their infants.... We already know we should start teaching children before they start school."

— President Bill Clinton, State of the Union Address, February 4, 1997

Preparing our children for the 21st century is among our most important national priorities. Over the past few years, scientific research has demonstrated that the earliest years of life -- before children reach school age -- are critical to their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. President Clinton is meeting the challenge to improve those years by investing in research, supporting parents and caregivers, and strengthening programs that provide early intervention to disadvantaged families.

Increased participation in Head Start, created Early Head Start for 0-3 year olds, and improved program quality. For more than thirty years, Head Start has been one of our nation's best investments. By ensuring that low-income children start school ready to learn, Head Start can pay for itself. For that reason, President Clinton has made expanding and improving Head Start a priority of his Administration. Over the past four years, funding for the program has increased by 43%, and in fiscal year 1997 Head Start will serve 800,000 low-income children four years old and younger. Initiated in 1994, there are now 142 *Early Head Start* programs across the country, expanding the proven benefits of Head Start to low-income families with children under three. Over the last three years, the Clinton Administration has also invested significantly in improving program quality, providing local programs with the resources they need to attract and retain high quality teachers and ensuring the safety of Head Start centers. The President's 1998 budget proposal provides a \$324 million increase in Head Start's budget so that it will remain on course to serve 1 million children by 2002.

Increased participation in WIC program. WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program provides nutrition packages, nutrition education, and health referrals to low-income pregnant women, infants, and children. Over the past four years participation has expanded by 1.7 million from 5.7 to 7.4 million women, infants, and children. The increase in the President's budget proposal fulfills his commitment to achieving full participation in WIC by the end of 1998. Research shows that WIC prenatal services save Medicaid much more than they cost by reducing health care expenses in the first 60 days after birth.

Raised Childhood Immunization Rates to an All-Time High. The President's Childhood Immunization Initiative focuses on five areas: 1)improving the quality and quantity of vaccination delivery services; 2) reducing vaccine costs for parents; 3)increasing community participation, education and partnerships; 4)improving systems to monitor diseases and vaccinations; and 5) improving vaccines and vaccine use. This initiative has achieved notable success: in 1995, seventy-five percent of two-year olds were fully immunized -- an historic high. Funding for childhood immunization has doubled since fiscal year 1993.

Improved Support for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Infants and Families Program supports the continuing efforts of States to implement high quality statewide early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Over the past four years, funding for the program has increased by 48% or \$102.5 million. During the same period, the number of children served increased by 21.5 percent. An estimated 191,000 children will be served in fiscal year 1998.

Enhanced Family Literacy Program. Even Start Family Literacy is a family-focused grant program to improve the educational opportunities for children and their parents in low-income areas by integrating family literacy activities, including early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education. Since 1993, funding for Even Start has increased by over 40% to support programs in every state and the District of Columbia.

Improved Child Care in Public Housing. The Early Childhood Development Program helps to provide quality child care for families living in public housing communities, as well as families who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. The program allows parents or guardians who live in public housing to get and keep jobs by ensuring that their children are cared for. In 1996, \$21 million was awarded to public housing sites across the country -- three times more than in 1994.

Providing Funding for Parent Resource Centers in 42 States. In addition to involving parents in the development of state and local education plans, the President's Goals 2000 program provides funding to establish parent resource centers that help parents learn how to help their children meet high standards. The centers provide training, distribute resource materials, and support a variety of programs that strengthen family involvement in education. In fiscal year 1997, funding is available for support centers in 42 states, 14 more than in 1996.

Promoting Parents as First Teachers. The President's America Reads Challenge, a campaign to ensure that every child can read well by the end of the third grade, includes Parents as First Teachers Challenge Grants to fund proven local, regional and national programs that provide assistance to parents to help their children become successful readers. The grants can be used to expand successful programs such as the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPHY) and the Parents as First Teachers (PAT) program. They will also fund national and regional networks to share information on how parents can help children to read.

Supported Over 90% of all Children's Research. In fiscal year 1995, the federal government spent an estimated \$2 billion on research and development directly related to children and youth. Spending at The National Institutes of Health (NIH) alone increased 25% between 1993 and 1997. This research has contributed to the recent advances in understanding early learning and language development.

Maintained the Commitment to the Medicaid Guarantee for 10 Million Children Under 6 Years Old. This Administration has protected and, preserved -- and now will improve on -- the guarantee of Medicaid coverage for 36 million Americans, including 9 million children under the age of 6. In 1995, the President vetoed the Republican Medicaid block grant proposal that would have ended the guarantee of coverage for up to 4 million children by 2002. At the same time, the President worked with states by granting 15 comprehensive Medicaid waivers and approving many more state plan amendments that improve and expand coverage for children.

Seeks to Extend Health Coverage to Up to 5 Million Children. Although this Administration has made great strides in protecting the health of America's neediest children, there is still much to be done. In 1995, more than 10 million American children, 80% of whom have working parents, had no health insurance. The President's budget takes three important steps to address the problem of children who lack health insurance coverage:

- 1) Provides annual grants to states to cover health insurance premiums for families of workers who are in-between jobs;
- 2) Utilizes state partnership grants to help working families who are not eligible for Medicaid to purchase private insurance for their children; and
- 3) Expands Medicaid coverage by allowing states to continue Medicaid coverage for up to one year even if family income changes, intensifying outreach to children who are currently eligible but not enrolled, and continuing current law expansions of coverage to reach poor children between the ages of 13 and 18.

Increased Child Care Funding. Since 1993 federal funding for child care has increased by 22%, providing quality services for over 660,000 children of whom 65% are under 5 years of age. The newly established Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) has made available \$2.9 billion to states. This new program, authorized by the new welfare law, will assist low-income families and those coming off welfare to obtain child care so they can work or attend school.

Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning. The Administration has launched a major new effort to eliminate childhood lead poisoning. The campaign includes notification and disclosure to parents who buy or lease older homes so that they get the information they need to protect their children, grants to states to control lead-based paint hazards in low-income privately-owned dwellings, development of a consensus on lead safety standards, and technical assistance to ensure that lead hazard control work is done safely and efficiently.



The Bell Curve Is a Curve Ball

*There is no defense or security for any of us
except in the highest intelligence and development of all.*

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

MY BROTHER Hugh once told me about a professional football coach who stands before his players at the first session of spring training, holds up a football, and says, "Gentlemen, this is a football."

I am particularly fond of this story because it is a reminder that most of us could use a little coaching to do our best, even at long-accustomed tasks. That is at least as true of parenting as it is of football.

Recent discoveries in neuroscience, molecular biology, and psychology have given researchers a whole new understanding of when and how the human brain develops. Their findings are a crucial kind of coaching that can show parents and other caregivers how to elicit a child's full potential. The rest of the village can, if we listen in, pick up information and ideas that will help us to steer our communities' efforts and our nation's policies in a more productive direction for children. Above all, this new information makes clear that a child's character and potential are not already determined at birth.

. . .

THE beliefs we hold about why children think, feel, and behave in certain ways have a tremendous impact on how we treat them. When those beliefs are inaccurate, the consequences can be dire.

During law school, I worked with the staff of the Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut to help draft guidelines for the treatment of abused children. Sometimes these children were brought into the emergency room by parents who themselves had inflicted the injuries. Often the parents denied what they had done, but sometimes they tried to justify it. One father who brought in his badly injured three-year-old claimed that he had beaten the boy to "get the devil out of him." Behind his horrifying actions lurked the belief that babies are born either good or bad. If their fundamental nature is "bad," as evidenced by behavior like persistent crying, this crazy logic goes, they must be punished, beaten if necessary. (Never mind that the "remedy" generally has the perverse effect of encouraging "bad" children to live up to their label.)

That same year, I also studied children at the Yale Child Study Center. One of the people I was privileged to work with was the late Dr. Sally Provence, a pioneer in the field of infant behavior. I remember watching her work with a mother who had brought in her seven-month-old son because he was having trouble eating and sleeping. The mother was at her wits' end and feared she might hurt her baby. She didn't understand what was wrong with him, but instead of writing him off as a "bad" child, she'd had the wisdom to seek help.

Under Dr. Provence's gentle questioning, the woman revealed that her first pregnancy, which resulted in the birth of a girl, had been a joyous experience, and her

daughter was an "easy" child. But her second pregnancy had been strained by marital and other tensions in her life, which had persisted. Dr. Provence helped the woman to see that even though her son had a different and more difficult temperament than her daughter, the problems she was having with him stemmed mostly from his keen awareness of her feelings of distress when she was around him. The two of them were caught in a cycle, and as the months went by, the baby's prospects for healthy development were spiraling downward.

With Dr. Provence's guidance, the mother learned to change the way she behaved around her son. She learned how to soothe him when he became fussy by holding him snugly. She talked to him more, in a gentler voice. Her new way with him allowed him to relax and become more manageable, which in turn softened her attitude toward him and restored her confidence in her abilities as a parent.

It is not only parents who need expert "coaching" in children's development. The rest of the village does too. In my years of work with children's organizations—the Carnegie Council on Children, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, for example—I saw many dedicated souls trying to see that current knowledge guided practical decisions about children's welfare.

Once, about fifteen years ago, I represented an Arkansas couple who wanted to adopt a four-year-old boy who had been in their foster care for three years. The boy had been badly neglected as a baby by his biological mother, who was overwhelmed by psychological problems. When he was less than a year old, she turned him over to the local social service agency so she could follow

her boyfriend to another state. At that point, the baby showed all the symptoms of severe mistreatment: he had gained little weight since birth, he was unresponsive, and he shied away from human contact.

In his foster family, however, the boy began to thrive. He put on weight and began to allow people to touch him. He learned to walk and began talking. His foster parents fell in love with him and decided they wanted to adopt him, even though they had signed the customary contract with the state, which at that time prohibited foster parents from trying to adopt children in their care. The state adoption agency, reluctant to break precedent, had refused their request. At the same time, however, the agency decided not to return the boy to his birth mother, who had filed suit to get him back, claiming she had overcome her psychological problems and was fit to care for him. Instead, the state planned to take him from the security of the family he knew and turn him over to strangers whose names were on the adoption lists.

I argued on behalf of the boy's foster parents that the best interests of the child should take precedence over both the birth mother's claims of her biological rights and the state's claims to its contractual agreement. I asked the judge to allow testimony from a child psychologist about the boy's progress while he had been in the care of his foster parents, and about the possible consequences to his physical, intellectual, and emotional development if he was now separated from them. The judge, who had children and grandchildren of his own, did not think that he had much to learn about child development, but he agreed to hear the testimony.

The psychologist explained how disrupting warm and secure attachments like those the boy had formed with

his foster family could irreversibly damage his emotional development. He described the symptoms and stages of grief that would typically accompany so great a loss at this age: anger and hostility, renewed withdrawal from human contact, depression and emotional detachment. At his stage of psychological development, the boy would also be inclined to believe he had been deliberately rejected by the foster parents he had come to trust and love. The testimony of the child psychologist riveted the entire courtroom, and it weighed heavily in the judge's determination that allowing the foster parents to adopt the boy served his best interests.

The years since I had these experiences have been light-years in terms of the progress researchers have made in understanding children's emotional and cognitive development. Unfortunately, much of this information is not yet known to enough people. At the risk of grossly oversimplifying the research, I want to summarize what is known, with the hope of reaching people whose attitudes toward and treatment of children might benefit from it.

Some of the most significant headway has been made in the field of biology, where researchers have begun to grasp how the brain develops.

At birth, an infant's brain is far from fully formed. In the days and weeks that follow, vital connections begin to form among the brain cells. These connections, called synapses, create the brain's physical "maps," the pathways along which learning will take place, allowing the brain to perform increasingly complicated tasks. A newborn's brain is like an orchestra just before the curtain goes up, the billions of instruments it will need to

express itself in language, thought, and impulse furiously tuning up.

The first three years of life are crucial in establishing the brain cell connections. But they don't form in a vacuum. Babies need food for their brains as well as their bodies, not only good physical nourishment but loving, responsive caregiving from their parents and the other adults who tend to them. They need to see light and movement, to hear loving voices, and, above all, to be touched and held.

As science writer Ronald Kotulak explained in a series of Pulitzer Prize-winning articles in the *Chicago Tribune*, "The outside world is indeed the brain's real food . . . [which it] gobbles up . . . in bits and chunks through its sensory system: vision, hearing, smell, touch, and taste." He quotes psychiatrist Felton Earls of Harvard University's School of Public Health, who elaborates, "Just as the digestive system can adapt to many types of diets, the brain adapts to many types of experiences."

Kotulak uses an analogy from cyberspace to make the process clearer. If we conceive of the brain as the most powerful and sophisticated computer imaginable, the child's surroundings act like a keyboard, inputting experience. The computer comes with so much memory capacity that for the first three years it can store more information than an army of humans could possibly input. By the end of three or four years, however, the pace of learning slows. The computer will continue to accept new information, but at a decreasing rate. The process continues to slow as we mature, and as we age our brain cells and synapses begin to wither away.

What sets the brain apart from any computer in exis-

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tence, however, is its fragile and ongoing relationship to the world around it. The brain is an organ, not a machine, and its "hardware" is still being wired at birth, and for a long time afterward. With proper stimulation, brain synapses will form at a rapid pace, reaching adult levels by the age of two and far surpassing them in the next several years. The quality of the nutrition, caregiving, and stimulation the child receives determines not only the eventual number of these synapses but also how they are "wired" for both cognitive and emotional intelligence. Synapses that are not used are destroyed.

As neuroscientist Bob Jacobs says, the bottom line is: "You have to use it or you lose it." If we think of the brain as our most important muscle, we can appreciate that it requires activity in order to develop. Just as babies need to flex their arms and legs, they also need regular, varied stimulation to exercise all the parts of their brains.

When parents talk to their babies, for example, they are feeding the brain cells that process sound and helping to create the connections necessary for language development. A University of Chicago study showed that by the age of two, children whose mothers had talked to them frequently since infancy had bigger vocabularies than children from the same socioeconomic backgrounds whose mothers had been less talkative.

What I am passing along to you is a bare-bones description of what scientists believe happens within the developing brain; the processes are more complex than I can do justice to, and they are not yet fully understood. But it is clear that by the time most children begin preschool, the architecture of the brain has essentially been constructed. From that time until adolescence, the brain remains a relatively eager learner with occasional

"growth spurts," but it will never again attain the incredible pace of learning that occurs in the first few years.

Nevertheless, as long as our brain stays healthy, we will have plenty of synapses left for learning. Even late in life, and even after a long diet of mental "junk food," the brain retains the capacity to respond to good nourishment and proper stimulation. But neurologically speaking, playing catch-up is vastly more difficult and costly, in terms of personal sacrifice and social resources, than getting children's brains off to a good start in the first place.

THE picture of the brain as a developing organ that has begun to emerge from biological research dovetails with some key findings from the world of psychology. Nowhere is this more welcome than in the study of what constitutes intelligence, an area of inquiry that has been clouded by controversy, misinformation, and misinterpretation.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to assert that intelligence is fixed at birth, part of our genetic makeup that is invulnerable to change, a claim promoted by Charles Murray and the late Richard Herrnstein in their 1994 book, *The Bell Curve*. This view is politically convenient: if nothing can alter intellectual potential, nothing need be offered to those who begin life with fewer resources or in less favorable environments. But research provides us with plenty of evidence that this perspective is not only unscientific but insidious. It is increasingly apparent that the nature-nurture question is not an "either/or" debate so much as a "both/and" proposition.

Dr. Frederick Goodwin, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health, cites studies in which children who could be described as being "at risk" for developmental problems were exposed at an early age to stimulating environments. The result: The children's IQ scores increased by as much as 20 points. A similar study, best known as the Abecedarian Project, examined this same process in a long and intensive research effort begun under the leadership of psychologist and educator Craig Ramey at the University of North Carolina in the early 1970s.

Ramey gathered together a group of more than a hundred newborns, most of them African-Americans. Their parents, most of whom had not graduated from high school, had an average IQ of 85. The majority of the families were living on welfare.

At the age of four months, half of the children were placed in a preschool with a very high ratio of adult staff to children. But it wasn't only the attention these children were given that was special. When adults spoke to them, they used words that were descriptive and that were suited to the child's stage of learning. They were doing precisely what responsive parents do when they communicate with their young sons and daughters.

The children in this group were given good nutrition, educational toys, and plenty of other stimulation, as well as the encouragement to explore their surroundings. A "home-school resource teacher" met with each family every other week to coach the parents on how to help their children with school-related lessons and activities.

By the time the children were three years old, those in the experimental group of children averaged 17 points higher on IQ tests than the other half of the original

group, 101 versus 84. Even more significant than these impressive gains is their durability: the differences in IQ persisted a decade later, when the children were attending a variety of other schools. Dr. Ramey is continuing to follow the children to see what their further development brings.

Bear this research in mind when you listen to those who argue that our nation cannot afford to implement comprehensive early education programs for disadvantaged children and their families. If we as a village decide not to help families develop their children's brains, then at least let us admit that we are acting not on the evidence but according to a different agenda. And let us acknowledge that we are not using all the tools at our disposal to better the lives of our children.

ANY discussion of how the brain's processes affect cognitive intelligence tells only half the story about the first blossoming of intelligence. The other half is how we behave in our relations with other people—what is now being called our "emotional intelligence."

One unusual aspect of living in the Arkansas governor's mansion was getting to know prison inmates who were assigned to work in the house and the yard. When we moved in, I was told that using prison labor at the governor's mansion was a long-standing tradition, which kept down costs, and I was assured that the inmates were carefully screened. I was also told that onetime murderers were by far the preferred security risks. The crimes of the convicted murderers who worked at the governor's mansion usually involved a disagreement with someone

they knew, often another young man in their neighborhood, or they had been with companions who had killed someone in the course of committing another crime.

I had defended several clients in criminal cases, but visiting them in jail or sitting next to them in court was not the same as encountering a convicted murderer in the kitchen every morning. I was apprehensive, but I agreed to abide by tradition until I had a chance to see for myself how the inmates behaved around me and my family.

I saw and learned a lot as I got to know them better. We enforced rules strictly and sent back to prison any inmate who broke a rule. I discovered, as I had been told I would, that we had far fewer disciplinary problems with inmates who were in for murder than with those who had committed property crimes. In fact, over the years we lived there, we became friendly with a few of them, African-American men in their thirties who had already served twelve to eighteen years of their sentences.

I found myself wondering what kind of experiences and character traits had led them to participate in the violent and self-destructive acts that landed them in prison. The longer and better I came to know them, the more convinced I became that their crimes were not the result of inferior IQs or an inability to apply moral reasoning. Although they had not finished high school, they seemed to have active and inquisitive minds. Some had whimsy as well as street smarts. They showed sound judgment in solving problems in their work, and they plainly knew the difference between right and wrong. What, I wondered, had caused them to commit a crime that resulted in the loss of another's life?

Now that I have read Daniel Goleman's *Emotional In-*

telligence, I am better able to understand what back then I could only wonder about.

Goleman brings to our attention new breakthroughs in psychology and neuroscience that shed light on how our "two minds"—the rational and the emotional—operate together to determine human behavior. Both forms of intelligence are essential to human interaction, and as any parent or teacher can tell you, both are constantly at work. If rational intelligence is unchecked by feeling for others, it can be used to orchestrate a holocaust, run a drug cartel, or carry out serial murders.

The power of emotion is equally dangerous if it is not harnessed to reason. People who cannot control their emotions are often prone to impulsive overreaction. They may be quick to perceive threats and slights even when none are intended, and to respond with violence. They are, in Goleman's phrase, "emotional illiterates." Many of the gang members interviewed as part of a recent study released by Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the extent of illegal use of firearms fit this profile. More than one in three said they believe it is acceptable to shoot someone who "disses" them—shows them disrespect.

As with cognitive intelligence, the development of emotional intelligence appears to hinge on the interplay between biology and early experience. Early experience—especially how infants are held, touched, fed, spoken to, and gazed at—seems to be key in laying down the brain's mechanisms that will govern feelings and behavior. Some experts speculate that the brains of emotional illiterates are hard-wired early on by stressful experiences that inhibit these mechanisms and leave people prey to emotional "hijacking" ever after.

Most of us don't habitually react with impulsive violence, but all of us "blow our tops," give in to irrational fears, or otherwise feel overwhelmed—hijacked—by our emotions from time to time. Why do we, as thoughtful human beings, allow emotional impulse to override rational thinking?

As Goleman explains, the temporary "hijackings" are ordered by the amygdala, a structure in the oldest, most primitive part of the brain, which is thought to be the physical seat of our emotions. This brain structure acts like a "home security system," scanning incoming signals from the senses for any hint of experience that the primitive mind might perceive as frightening or hurtful.

Whenever the amygdala picks up such stimuli, it reacts instantaneously, sending out an emergency alarm to every major part of the brain. This alarm triggers a chain of self-protective reactions. The body begins to secrete hormones that signal an urgent need for "fight or flight" and put a person's senses on highest alert. The cardiovascular system, the muscles, and the gut go into overdrive. Heart rate and blood pressure jump dramatically, breathing slows. Even the memory system switches into a faster gear as it scans its archives for any knowledge relevant to the emergency at hand.

The amygdala acts as a storehouse of emotional memories. And the memories it stores are especially vivid because they arrive in the amygdala with the neurochemical and hormonal imprint that accompanies stress, anxiety, or other intense excitement. "This means that, in effect, the brain has two memory systems, one for ordinary facts and one for emotionally charged ones," Goleman notes. And he adds, "A special system for emotional memories makes excellent sense in evolution, of

course, ensuring that animals would have particularly vivid memories of what threatens or pleases them. But emotional memories can be faulty guides to the present."

Problems arise because the amygdala often sends a false alarm, when the sense of panic it triggers is related to memories of experiences that are no longer relevant to our circumstances. For example, traumatic episodes from as far back as infancy, when reason and language were barely developed, can continue to trigger extreme emotional responses well into adulthood.

The neocortex—the thoughtful, analytical part of the brain that evolved from the primitive brain—acts as a "damper switch for the amygdala's surges." Most of the time the neocortex is in control of our emotional responses. But it takes the neocortex longer to process information. This gives the instantaneous, extreme responses triggered by the amygdala a chance to kick in before the neocortex is even aware of what has happened. When this occurs, the brain's built-in regulatory process can be short-circuited.

Most people learn how to avoid emotional hijackings from the time they are infants. If they have supportive and caring adults around them, they pick up the social cues that enable them to develop self-discipline and empathy. According to Dr. Geraldine Dawson of the University of Washington, the prime period for emotional development appears to be between eight and eighteen months, when babies are forming their first strong attachments. As with cognitive development, the window of change extends to adolescence and beyond, although it narrows over time. But children who have stockpiled painful experiences, through abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence, may have difficulty enlisting the rational

brain to override the pressure to display destructive and antisocial reactions later in life.

The answer to Goleman's essential question—"How can we bring intelligence to our emotions—and civility to our streets and caring to our communal life?"—appears to be that, difficult as it may be, it is never too late to teach the elements of emotional intelligence. The structure imposed by the responsibilities of work and the enlightened assistance of concerned people in the prison system and at the governor's mansion helped those one-time murderers I knew in Arkansas to achieve a greater understanding of and control over their feelings and behavior.

A number of schools around the country are incorporating the teaching of empathy and self-discipline—what social theorist Amitai Etzioni calls "character education"—into their curricula. In New Haven, Connecticut, a social development approach is integrated into every public school child's daily routine. Children learn techniques for developing and enhancing social skills, identifying and managing emotions like anger, and solving problems creatively. The program appears to raise achievement scores and grades as well as to improve behavior.

WE ARE beginning to act—albeit slowly—on the evidence biology and psychology provide to us. But practice lags far behind research findings. As Dr. Craig Ramey notes, "If we had a comparable level of knowledge with respect to a particular form of cancer or hypertension or

some other illness that affected adults, you can be sure we would be acting with great vigor."

If, in scientific terms, the twentieth century has been the century of physics, then the twenty-first will surely be the century of biology. Not only are scientists mapping our genetic makeup, but new technologies are letting them peer into living organisms and view our brains in action. The question we must all think about is whether we will put to good use this accumulating knowledge. Can we find ways to communicate it to all parents, so that it can help them to raise their children and to seek out coaching if they need it? Will we give working mothers and fathers enough time to spend feeding their babies' brains? Will we have the foresight and the political will to provide more and better early education programs for preschoolers, especially those from homes without adequate "brain food"? Will we challenge elementary school students with foreign languages, math, and music to reinforce brain connections early in a child's life? Given the increasing level of violence and family breakdown we see around us, why wouldn't we?

IN THE next few chapters I will explore what happens in families during the first few years of children's lives—the period that we now know is so vital in giving them a solid start. Researchers may differ over how particular experiences influence a child's development, but no research study I have ever read has disputed that the quality of life within the family constellation strongly affects how well infants and young children will adapt to the circum-

stances that confront them throughout their lives. On the contrary, the research underscores the critical importance of constructive stimulation during a child's earliest years.

But if family life is chaotic, if parents are depressed and unexpressive, or if caregivers change constantly, so that children can rely on no one, their ability to perform the essential tasks of early childhood will be impaired. The next time you hear someone using the word "investment" to describe what we need to do for our younger, more vulnerable family members, think about the investments the village has the power to make in children's first few weeks, months, and years. They will reap us all extraordinary dividends as children travel through the crucial stages of cognitive and emotional development to come.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

January 10, 1997

For Immediate Release

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT CHILD DEVELOPMENT EVENT

Georgetown Medical Center
Washington, DC

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. I am so pleased to see all of you here and I'm delighted to be back at Georgetown Medical Center, where I have visited before, because I think that the work that is being done here and the announcement today is among the most important efforts that are going on right now in our Capital City, because if we were able to make it clear to every parent in Washington, D.C. and beyond that reading to one's child between birth and three is one of the most important jobs that a parent can do, I think we would all see remarkable progress being made in school readiness, in school performance, in relationships between parents and children.

I want to thank Dr. Rennart (phonetic) for his remarks and for his leadership as the Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics. I want to ask Dr. Battle to convey to the Academy of Pediatrics our deep appreciation because of their support of this effort and so many other good works that the Academy does on behalf of children. I also want to acknowledge a few other people who are in the audience.

I want to acknowledge my friend, Leo Donovan, the President of Georgetown who has been very supportive of efforts concerning education and literacy not only here at the university, but around Washington.

I also want to thank Jules Stoddard, who is representing the Association of Book Sellers for Children and is the owner of the Cheshire Cat Bookstore in Washington, D.C., one of the nation's oldest children's bookstores.

In my book, It Takes a Village, I mention the Association's program called "The Most Important Twenty Minutes of Your Day -- Read With a Child." I think for many people that was originally thought to refer to older children -- children in kindergarten or even grade school.

What we are trying to do and what the Association for Book Sellers is attempting to do is to convey clearly the message that we want reading to children to start at birth, but particularly during those first three years of life.

I also want to acknowledge and thank Steven Herb (phonetic) and Susan Roman, president and executive director respectively of the Association for Library Services to Children, a division of the American Library Association. I also mentioned their national demonstration program in my book, "Born To Read," and actually contributed some of the book proceeds recently to that, because this three-year national demonstration project, which builds partnerships between libraries and health care providers such as Dr. Rennart and Dr. Battle, is helping low-income parents and others with poor literacy skills to understand the importance of reading to their children.

And finally, I want to thank Dr. Tina Cheng and Dr. Sandra Kuzi (phonetic) who are part of "Reach Out and Read" here in Washington. This is a program that inspired me greatly when I first heard about it, and I know Dr. Kuzi has just this week received a \$3,000 grant to buy books to start "Reach Out and Read" at Washington Children's Medical Center. This is a program that really exemplifies what we are talking about here today.

We know, and as Dr. Battle said, that most parents come into contact with a pediatrician -- they may not take their child to a library, they may not take that child to a preschool program until the child is over three, but they will in all likelihood come into contact with a health care provider. If that doctor or nurse who is administering the well-baby checkup or the vaccination will prescribe reading, and then take it a step further -- not merely prescribe reading, but hand that parent and child a book, we know that in most cases the parents will try to follow through on the doctor's prescription.

So that is what we are kicking off here, and so many groups have come together to be part of this.

I'm also pleased to be here today and to be in the company of a very special guest. Yesterday the President honored some of America's finest artists, writers, and thinkers with the National Medal of Arts and the Charles Frankel Prizes. One of them, Maurice Sendak, rearranged his busy schedule so that he could stay one more day and meet with some of Washington's youngest citizens, which we will do after this presentation.

As many of you know who have read to your children, as my husband and I have, Maurice Sendak is one of our country's most beloved authors and illustrators of children's books. His stories and characters have captured and stimulated the imaginations of generations of children and, as my husband said yesterday, imaginations of countless parents as well.

When Chelsea was little, Bill and I would take turns reading "Where The Wild Things Are," and many of Mr. Sendak's other stories as well. Soon she was able to read along with us, and before long, she was able to read that story to others on her own. Like many parents, we

owe Mr. Sendak a debt of gratitude for helping us to spur our daughter's imagination and reading skills. And later some of the children here at the Medical Center will have a chance to hear him do it in person.

I'm also grateful to his publisher, Harper Collins, for donating 75 of his books to the Medical Center, and I would hope other publishers of children's books would join hands with the pediatricians around our country to do the same.

I want to emphasize just a few points that Dr. Rennart and Dr. Battle made, because I noticed some quizzical looks in the eyes of some of the people who are here covering this event. We have known for a long time that reading to children is a nice thing to do. It is a way to create a quiet time between an adult and a child. We have even known that, because of recent research, reading in those early years does lay the groundwork for vocabulary and later reading success. What we have not known until recently -- and because of advances in neurobiology and other medical sciences, we now do know -- is that talking with one's child in those first three years and reading to that child actually helps make the brain grow.

Now, I want to emphasize that because it sounds almost hard to believe. But we now understand that as Dr. Rennart was explaining, that the connections between brain cells and the opportunities for the brain to do more complex work are enhanced because of time spent talking with and reading to very young children.

Now, there are many people, and we all know them, who think that children really don't learn much until they can learn to talk. Well, in fact, the work that is being done in the brain of a child from birth to three is so profoundly significant that if we do not recognize its importance, then we will not have helped that child develop to his or her fullest potential. The earlier we expose our children to hearing stories and listening to adults talk, the better off they are.

And I want to add that the evidence so far shows the television is not substitute. The words that have come across the television screen do not have the same effect on creating that growth in a child's awareness that reading to a child and talking to a child, person to person, does. So you cannot make up for this by putting the child in front of the television set and expect that child to have the same opportunities that reading and talking provide.

We feel so strongly about this that it is one of the reasons the President is accelerating the administration's efforts to strengthen early education and raise awareness about the importance of developing children's brains in the first years of life. There will be a number of programs in these next few months that we hope will bring to broader public attention what scientists now know about brain development.

Many parents, I think, will be very surprised when they see some of the television specials, some of the magazine specials that will be coming out in the next several months, because for me as well as for many others of my generation, this is all new.

The President is challenging Americans to become involved in helping children to read on their own by third grade. But in order for that to be successful we not only need to mentor and help our children and our teachers in schools, we need to help parents know that they are a child's first teacher.

Over the years I have met many parents who told me they never really talked to their babies because they didn't think that it made any difference. I remember the first time this happened, and I recounted in my book when I was making conversation with a group of women with some toddlers. And I said, you must be having a great time reading and talking to your babies. And they looked at me with such quizzical looks because they said, why would we do that, they can't talk back. So from that point, I have made it my mission, when I see young parents with babies to ask them if they're talking and reading, and to try to stimulate that as something they want to do.

Sometimes parents say back to me that they don't read very well themselves. And my response to that is, your baby won't know any different. Hold the book, turn the pages, make the story up, and try to get your own literacy skills to improve as well. But you can hardly embarrass a one-year-old when you're reading nearly anything to that child.

So I hope that we're going to be able to get this message out. There are few things that I believe could make a more dramatic difference over the next 10 years in this country than to persuade parents of all educational and economic levels to take this mission of reading to and talking with their young babies seriously.

I hope that all who are part of this effort today will be joining with the President and others of us to spread this message very broadly. As many of you know, I have been doing some work here in the District and meeting with people who are involved in the District's affairs. There are many things that we need to do here in our Capital City, but I would put reaching out to parents and educating parents and prescribing reading as this prescription does do at the very top of the list as to what if we did and stayed with that effort over a number of years could make a significant difference in this city and in every city around our country.

Thank you all for being part of this new effort.
(Applause.)

Now we get to go read "Where The Wild Things Are." So thank you all.

Q Might you have time for a quick question, Mrs. Clinton?

MRS. CLINTON: Sure.

Q I noticed and I just would ask you, you have stressed a very important and worthwhile theme. Is there anything else you can tell us about what you might be doing for the

District of Columbia in this regard, or anything you might wish to add at this point in time?

MRS. CLINTON: Not right at this time. But I think that in the next few weeks some of the administration's plans and commitments will be unveiled and we hope that there will be, as I sense there is -- and I appreciate your close attention to this over the years, because you've been very significant in bringing attention to what's going on here in the District -- I think there will be a series of efforts at partnership, to bring people together around the District's problems. And as I have said on other occasions, there is no quick fix, there is no magic wand, there is no individual who can change and fix a lot of the problems that the District has been suffering with over the years. But I believe that a concerted, carefully planned effort that enlists people of good faith from around the country -- not only just the District, because I believe strongly that this is our Nation's Capital, every American has a stake in the success of the people who live here in the District -- but I believe that kind of effort is going to take place. And if we are patient and persistent I think we will see results.

And I think you can only point to other cities around our country that were written off in the '70s and the '80s. I was recently in Cleveland and I can remember the kinds of things that were said about Cleveland not so very long ago. And going there is such an uplifting experience now because the business community, the religious community, the community leadership, individuals from every walk of life joined together to really rebuild that city. And not just in the visible way that we see with new construction, but really at the grass-roots level in reaching out to people.

So I'm very optimistic, although I'm realistic as well, I think.

Thank you all.

Q This is our "Born To Read" diaper bag. We don't get to give diaper bags to the First Lady -- (laughter.) And a little T-shirt maybe Socks could wear.

MRS. CLINTON: That is so cute. Thank you. Nobody thinks I'm trying it on. (Laughter.) Thank you very much.

END

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 13, 1997

Today, Hillary and I are pleased to announce that on April 17, 1997, we will host the *White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children*. The Conference, which will take place at the White House, will spotlight exciting new findings about how our children develop, and explore how we can make the most of this information to give our children what they need to thrive.

We hope that this one-day Conference will make the latest scientific research, nearly all supported by the federal government, more accessible and understandable to America's families. The research clearly indicates the importance of children's first few years to their later success in school and in life. This Conference is a continuation of my Administration's commitment to children and, in particular, it follows Hillary's work over the years on issues relating to early childhood development.

The Conference will examine how we can use this new research in practical ways -- to be better parents, more informed care-givers and more responsive members of our communities. It will also explore how this information can be used by all members of our society -- from corporate executives to pediatricians, from ministers to elected officials -- to help strengthen America's families.

Parents desperately want to do right by their children, and we all have a role to play in making sure they have the tools they need to do the best job they can. We believe this Conference can make a valuable contribution.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Embargoed For Release
Until 10:06 A.M. EDT
Saturday, April 12, 1997

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today, I want to talk about the toughest job any person can have. It's not a job you can quit, show up late for, or do just enough to get by. In every way, it's a lifetime commitment -- it's being a parent.

In our times, parenting has become an even greater challenge. The world moves faster, and parents rightly worry more about how to protect their children's health, their safety and their future. Jobs place more demands on mothers and fathers. Finding a balance between home and work takes more effort than ever.

Parents can use some help. And while government doesn't raise children, it can sometimes give parents the tools they need to make their jobs easier. That's why we fought for and won the V-chip and a ratings systems for TV, so parents can better protect their young children from unsuitable shows. That's we fought to keep the tobacco industry from advertising their products to children. And why we're fighting to keep streets safer and to reduce juvenile crime. All these help parents to do a better job with their children.

But there is still work to be done. Parents want to do right thing by their children from the very start. And giving our youngest children what they need to thrive from the very first days of life is something the First Lady has studied for a long time. In her book, "It Takes a Village," Hillary called on our nation to give its attention to new findings about the early years of children's lives that so often are overlooked in intellectual, social and emotional development.

Our administration has worked hard to better understand these early years. Since 1993, we increased funding for children's research at the National Institutes of Health by 25 percent -- or \$322 million -- and my balanced budget plan promotes further increases in funding. We expanded and improved Head Start, and we created an Early Head Start Program for children age three or younger so that they could get the stimulation they need at those critical times.

From our research, we know that from the very first days of life a child is developing emotionally and intellectually, and how he or she does in those first three years of life will help to determine how a child does later in school and in life. That's why we need to begin teaching and nurturing our children before they go to school.

We want to sort through our research and get it to parents and to care givers who work with children. So next week Hillary and I will bring together researchers, parents and other experts for the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children.

We will meet for a full day at the White House, with satellite hook-ups to more than 60 sites around our nation. This conference is an exciting and an enormous undertaking. It is a call to action to parents, to businesses, to care givers, the media, the faith community and the government, each to do their part to enhance the earliest years of life. It grows out of our commitment to find new ways to support parents and to help their children reach their God-given potential.

As part of that commitment, I also want to call today on the members of Congress to do their part to come to the aid of our families. They can do that very simply by passing my expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

This bill would allow workers up to 24 hours of unpaid leave each year to fulfill certain family obligations. It could allow a worker to attend a parent-teacher conference, or take a child to the pediatrician, or to find quality child care, or to care for an elderly relative.

Families occasionally need these small pieces of time to

take care of their own. More than 12 million American workers have taken leave for reasons covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act since it became the very first bill I signed into law in 1993. It was needed then, it's needed now and we need to improve on it. So I urge the Congress to act soon on this legislation. Don't ask people to choose ever between being good workers and good parents. We can help them to do both. Pass the expanded Family and Medical Leave Act.

I think this bill is so important that today I am asking all federal departments and agencies to make expanded Family and Medical Leave available to their workers immediately. Wherever possible, I want workers to have access right now to essential time off for family obligations.

I am committed to doing all we can to support families as they struggle to do right by their children. We know that the very earliest years will decide whether children grow up to become healthy and happy people. That's why we're giving parents time off to care for them, why we should extend the family leave law so millions more parents can have that opportunity and why we must focus all our science, education and public efforts to give our children the very best start in life.

Almost a century and a half ago, Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "A child's education should begin at least a hundred years before he was born."

What we do now can benefit generations of Americans to come. We can start with the smallest community -- the family. And from there we can rebuild and renew the best in America by beginning with the best of America, our children

Thanks for listening.

END

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

"Learning begins in the first days of life. Scientists are now discovering how young children develop emotionally and intellectually from their very first days, and how important it is for parents to begin immediately talking, singing, even reading to their infants.... We already know we should start teaching children before they start school."

--President Bill Clinton, State of the Union Address, February 4, 1997

On April 17, the President and First Lady will host *The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children*. The day-long conference will highlight new scientific findings on brain development in very young children and point to the importance of children's earliest experiences in helping them get off to a strong and healthy start.

Applying New Findings on Brain Development in the Earliest Years. New scientific research shows that experiences after birth -- particularly in the first three years of life -- have a dramatic impact on brain development. That means that nurturing, talking to, singing to and reading to our youngest children will improve their ability to learn and develop throughout their lives. The White House Conference will focus on the practical applications of the latest scientific research on the brain, particularly for parents and caregivers. The conference will also be a call to 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.

Clinton Administration Commitment to Young Children. This conference builds on the Clinton Administration's investment in children and families. The Administration has invested heavily in research to help us better understand the importance of the first few years of life to child development and learning. Between 1993 and 1997, funding for NIH children's research increased 25%, from \$1.3 billion to \$1.6 billion.

President Clinton has also strengthened efforts to support families with young children. To take just a few examples, the Administration raised funding for Head Start -- providing low-income children and their families with comprehensive education, health services, and nutrition -- by 43% over the last four years and created the Early Head Start program to support families with children ages zero to three. The President's FY 1998 Budget further increases participation to reach 122,000 more children in FY 1998 than when he took office. The Administration also dramatically increased participation in the WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program, providing 7.4 million pregnant women, infants, and children with nutrition packages and information and health referrals - 1.7 million more than when President Clinton took office. And his FY 1998 Budget would achieve his goal of full participation in the WIC program by the end of FY 1998.

Conference Program and Participants. During the morning session of the conference, leading researchers and child development experts will discuss the new research and what it means for parents and caregivers. The panelists for this session are: Dr. David Hamburg, Carnegie Corporation of New York (moderator); Dr. Carla Shatz, University of California, Berkeley; Dr. Donald Cohen, Yale Child Study Center; Dr. Patricia Kuhl, University of Washington; Dr. Ezra Davidson, Drew University of Medicine; Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Harvard University; and Dr. Deborah Phillips, National Research Council. The afternoon session will highlight model community efforts to support parents and enhance early childhood development. The panelists include: Avance Family Support and Education Program, San Antonio, TX; the CEO and Chairman of the Board, The Kellogg Company, Battle Creek Michigan; and Ounce of Prevention, Chicago, IL.

Broad Participation Across the Country. The morning session of the conference will be broadcast by satellite to over 50 locations across the country. The satellite conferences will be co-hosted by regional federal agencies, local officials, and children's and other organizations.

**THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF MEDIA AFFAIRS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: 202/456-7150

April 8, 1997

**PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON TO HOST WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING**

Washington, DC -- President and Mrs. Clinton will host the *White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What the Newest Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children*, on Thursday, April 17, 1997. The conference will spotlight recent findings about how children develop from the earliest days, and will explore what this means for parents and policy makers.

"We hope that this one-day conference will make the latest scientific research more accessible and understandable to America's families," President Clinton said in announcing the conference last month. "Our goal is to take this information and explore how it can be translated into everyday actions and activities involving children."

"We're excited that so many people will be able to take part in this event. We all have a role to play in making sure parents have the tools they need to do the best job they can," Mrs. Clinton said. "We believe this Conference can make a valuable contribution."

The morning session will also be broadcast, by satellite, to sites across the country. Watch parties will be co-hosted by regional federal agencies, local officials, children's and other organizations.

President and Mrs. Clinton will open the morning session, which will feature leading researchers and child experts. Among those who will talk about the new research and what it means to parents are: pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton, neuroscientist Carla Shatz, and Director of the Yale Child Study Center Donald Cohen.

The afternoon session will highlight model programs from across the nation that are supporting parents and enhancing early childhood development. Among the programs that will be discussed are the Avance Family Support program based in San Antonio, Texas, and the Ounce of Prevention program based in Chicago, Illinois.

Morning Session Discussion Participants

Dr. David Hamburg, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Carnegie produced *Starting Points*, the seminal study on early childhood development. Dr. Hamburg will serve as moderator.

Dr. Donald Cohen, Yale University, will discuss how children's behavior helps us understand their cognitive, emotional and social development.

Dr. Carla Shatz, University of California, Berkeley, will explain how children's brains grow and develop in the earliest years of life.

Dr. Patricia Kuhl, University of Washington, will discuss how children learn language.

Dr. Ezra Davidson, Drew University of Medicine, will discuss the importance of prenatal and perinatal services.

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Harvard University, will talk about the pediatrician's role in early childhood development.

Dr. Deborah Phillips, Institute of Medicine, will discuss how child care can affect early development.

Afternoon Session Participants

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez, Avance Family Support Program
San Antonio, TX

Avance is a widely acclaimed family support and education program serving predominantly Hispanic communities.

Harriet Meyer, Ounce of Prevention
Chicago, IL

Ounce of Prevention is a statewide program that develops and tests innovative early childhood development programs for replication, and runs model Early Head Start and childcare programs.

Melvin Wearing, Chief of Police
New Haven, CT

Will talk about a pioneering initiative that trains community police officers to use child development principles in their work.

Arnold Langbo, The Kellogg Company
Battle Creek, MI

Kellogg launched a community-wide effort last fall to provide practical early brain development information to every Battle Creek parent and caregiver.

Rob Reiner, CastleRock Entertainment
Los Angeles, CA

Will talk about the "I Am Your Child" campaign launched this month, and the media's role in making early childhood development information available.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 3, 1997

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
TO THE SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT
The Sheraton Washington
Washington, D.C.

MRS. CLINTON: -- I want to thank Dr. Elder and thank all of you for the expertise and leadership you bring to the field of child development. The work you do is vitally important, not only in promoting a greater understanding of our children and how they develop but in strengthening our understanding and the connection between research, public policy, and people's everyday lives.

I've had a chance to look through the book that has been produced for this biannual conference -- and I know you haven't been in Washington, D.C., since, I believe, the 1930s -- but given the number of topics and presenters, it seems like you are more than making up for the fact that you have not been here for some time. The range of topics that you are addressing and the research that you are discussing touches on every aspect of children and families and the environments in which they grow and develop.

Many years ago, it seems to me now, when I was in law school, I had the chance to study children at the Yale Child Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut. I was privileged to work with many experts in the field of psychiatry and psychology and development and social work and medicine. And I was particularly privileged to work with one of the pioneers in the field of infant behavior, Dr. Sally Provence. I still have vivid memories of the gentle and subtle ways that Dr. Provence would elicit information from parents and infants to help establish better patterns of relating to children. And I would stand sometimes behind the one-way mirror, watching her work, thinking to myself, how can we know so much about these babies? How can we draw from their gestures and their patterns of relationships such lessons? That was before I myself was a mother.

Later on in the work that I have done with children's organizations, such as the Carnegie Council on Children and others, I have been interested in watching how experts, such as yourselves, have applied the knowledge that you have learned from research to public policy, and that has become one of my abiding interests. How do we take what you have developed

through research and apply it in the public policy arena? I think that that is a question that certainly should be on the minds of anyone who takes seriously Dr. Elder's challenge about the state of children in our country. We have made a lot of progress in many areas.

Certainly, if you look at the progress that has been made in infant mortality -- eradicating childhood diseases like measles or polio, developing and releasing new drugs and therapies, making it better known to the general public what are the conditions of child rearing that are more likely than not to benefit a child's development -- one can see a very clear nexus between medical science and research and policy. I don't know that we could have made as much progress in our understanding of certain hazards that affect the lives of children -- whether those hazards be lead or tobacco or alcohol or illegal drugs -- without basic research. We are also beginning to understand how violence is a public health epidemic, and the steps that need to be taken to try to protect our children from it.

In so many areas the research that you and your colleagues do every day enhances our teaching methods for children with learning disabilities; outlines the benefits of everything from educational television programming to friendship to nutrition; gives us new tools for devising care and services for infants, toddlers, young children, adolescents; helps us strengthen programs, whether they be child care or Head Start or school programs, aimed at providing better conditions toward a child's development.

In short, science and research need social policy. And social policy needs science and research, and needs scientists and researchers. There has to be a relationship so that the work that you do and that you report at this conference doesn't just stay in a room like this but is able to inform public debate far beyond these walls.

I have seen for myself in the programs that I've worked with how using the benefits of science and research can make a difference. Dr. Elder mentioned one program that I've been involved with called the Home Instruction Program for Pre-School Youngsters -- the acronym HIPPPY -- which I always get a kick out of saying. (Laughter.) Some of you may know that it's a program which started with research at Hebrew University in Israel. And using data from research on immigrants to Israel who were exposed to many of the same social conditions as those who had lived there longer but were not progressing as well in school, researchers devised a program to begin to work with the parents of such youngsters to increase the confidence of parents, primarily mothers, in their capacity to be their child's first teacher, to begin to lay the foundation for the acquisition of academic skills. And in country after country we've seen that programs like this, if properly administered, can make a difference not only in the preparation of a child but in the increased competence of a parent.

There are many such efforts that we could mention that researchers have devised that have helped to improve the quality of life for our children, our families and our communities. So I thank you and commend you for building on the rich legacy of the SRCD and providing this opportunity to showcase some of the latest advances in children's research. What I hope is that

this work will continue to inform scientists, decision-makers, child care providers, individual parents as we seek to create more promising conditions for the growth and development of our children.

We do face many challenges. On the one hand, there have been advances and greater understanding in how a child develops. On the other hand, we know that, given the necessary prerequisites for healthy development, we are falling short in many respects, in many communities. And we must have a united effort that involves every level of society in addressing the needs of children and putting to use the information that we have.

I think it's especially important that we continue with the federal government's historic support of basic research. (Applause.) All too often skeptics wonder why the government should invest in research instead of leaving research to the private sector. Yet we know that government support is essential to the kind of progress that we have already made and that we must continue to make on behalf of children, both in the scientific and public policy arenas.

This is especially important when we talk about the issues that you are concerned with. The federal government contributes more than 90 percent of the funding for children's research in this country. Since 1993, funding for children's health research has increased by 25 percent from the federal government. And we have seen some fruits already of that investment. Without federal support we simply would not be where we are today in terms of our understanding of child development.

As unfashionable as it is in some quarters today to suggest that government has any virtues at all -- (laughter) -- I believe that government, and in particular the federal government, can be instrumental in funding research that leads to better understanding of children's needs and in adopting policies shaped by that scientific knowledge. I also believe that the government can help people apply your research in practical ways that better their lives.

Research, for example, now confirms what many of our own parents and grandparents knew intuitively all along -- that hugging a baby and reading to a child or singing and talking to a child has an impact on that child's well-being. What our parents and grandparents and the vast majority of us did not know until recently is just how great an impact those activities have on actual brain development. Clearly, the latest research from neuroscience is a very exciting step in our understanding of how children grow in their earliest years.

But the information coming from our laboratories and our clinical studies is essentially useless if parents and caregivers and teachers and doctors and lawmakers and others who have an impact on children don't have any clue about that basic information nor what to do with it.

As some of you may know, the President and I will host a conference at the White House later this month on early childhood development and learning. Our goal is to help spread the word about new research on the development of the brain in the earliest years. And to take this

extraordinary information and explore how we translate it into our everyday actions affecting children.

The White House conference will bring together leading neuroscientists, pediatricians, and child development specialists -- including some of you in this room -- with child care providers, business and religious leaders and others who are putting this knowledge to practice. It is an important starting point, a first step. But much work will have to be done to ensure that parents and caregivers who need this information actually get it and know how to make use of it.

I am still constantly surprised, when I speak with people that I meet as I travel around the country about their young infants, how many of them still do not know that reading to an infant, singing to an infant, talking to an infant -- all of that is feeding that young child's development. I still have people say to me, well, why would I talk to him? He can't talk back. And it's not that the person who says that is in any way resistant to helping a child; it's that that is not something that they've ever been told. So we will do our best to tell as many people as possible about why what many of us did because we liked doing it and thought it was good for our children turned out after all to be essential.

But we have to be vigilant about how this information is used, because for all the good ideas that new research brings, it is always subject to manipulation, oversimplification, and misinterpretation. 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.

I am reminded of a man I know who became so obsessed after reading in a popular magazine about how synapses develop that he determined he would read two books to his young son every night -- and he raced through the material without ever giving the child a chance to look at the pictures or ask questions about the story and couldn't understand why his son was not enjoying this experience at all. (Laughter.) And speaking with some of us, as he described what had turned into a forced march toward reading, and we asked him questions about what it was he was hoping to get out of this experience with his son, it became clear that instead of a loving, nurturing, stimulating experience, it had become a tense obligation for them both.

So there is one anecdotal piece of evidence of someone who heard about brain development, applied what he thought would be the appropriate approach, and learned quickly that that is not what we're talking about.

It's very important that, as exciting as new discoveries about early brain development are, that the early years are not seen as the only important time in a child's life. We know, from your research and from reading various reports like the excellent Carnegie Foundation Reports "Starting Points" and "Years of Promise" and "Great Transitions," that children do not exist in a vacuum of time.

Many of you in your own research have shown that children need interaction, engagement, and stimulation every day and every year of their lives, and that they can profit from that. It will do our children little good if we only care about promoting cognitive development until the age of three and then pretend that all learning is over and done with. To fully understand a child's development, we must explore the dynamics of development during each stage of life -- from birth, through adolescence, and on to adulthood. And we should be willing to invest in young people at every step of their development.

I was reminded of that forcefully during my recent trip to Africa, when I was privileged to spend time with President Mandela on Robben Island, where he had been imprisoned for 27 years. He talked to me about how the political prisoners who were educated would take time to teach prisoners who were not. They would all work in a lime quarry from early in the morning until sundown and, because they were working they had more freedom than when they were in their cells or eating or taking exercise. So they would be using the opportunity of the sand and the quarry to be showing these other prisoners letters, and then to be talking with them about learning. And so many of the prisoners who came into the prison illiterate left literate, including one man who now holds a high position in the government.

Clearly, learning doesn't stop, and all of us have an opportunity to continue to promote learning. And even with our emphasis on early childhood, we need to make clear that all people deserve a chance to learn and develop, and that although we should put more resources and attention on the earliest years, that should not be the only place that we place emphasis. I imagine that there will be some people who upon hearing about the importance of reading and talking to infants and toddlers will wonder whether mothers and fathers should immediately quit their jobs to stay home with their children and read to them all day. Some parents may, I'm sure, begin to second-guess their own personal and professional choices.

Here again, a combination of research and common sense ought to be our guide. As we will learn tomorrow from the results of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study about child care, it does make a difference to the cognitive development of children if they are in a nurturing, stimulating child care environment.

But what does this mean in practice? It means that all children need love, attention, stimulation, and discipline no matter what settings they are in, whether it's with their own parents, babysitters, caregivers, preschool teachers, neighbors, or relatives. I have seen examples, as I'm sure many of you have over the years, of parents who work full-time and sometimes double-time and still manage to give their children the love and support they need for healthy development. And I've seen parents who stay home all day and are uninvolved, inattentive, and emotionally divorced from the children they are raising.

The same can be said for child care. There is a huge chasm of quality among child care providers, from the most nurturing and stimulating caregivers to those who fall far short of the mark.

So I hope that rather than further confusing parents on these sensitive issues, we will help them by using this new research in ways that are sensible and appropriate to their own family circumstances. There is so much we can do together by taking the results of your work, translating it into language that average parents can understand, making sure it is disseminated widely to people who have responsibility for children, and challenging decision-makers in business and government, academia, religion, every aspect of our life together, to apply what we know helps children's development in all that we do.

I know that among those participating in this conference are many established veterans of children's research, as well as some of you who are just embarking on careers. To those of you who have devoted your lifetimes to expanding our understanding of children, we are grateful for your ongoing commitment and for the wisdom and expertise you continue to lend us. And to those of you who are new to the profession, we are encouraged by your decision to commit yourselves to this important field, and we eagerly await your contributions in the years ahead.

The child development research community is making a profound contribution to the future well-being of our country. Just as your work has inspired me and many others who have watched it and followed it from outside the profession, you can't open new vistas for people everywhere. And as you gather to discuss your research in all its rich, technical complexity, please consider too its implications for public policy and the everyday lives of families. It is not always easy to take research and apply it to the public policy arena. And certainly the complexity of what you study and the results that you achieve may not always fit into a sound bite for the nightly TV news.

But I hope that you will continue to search for ways to translate your work into information that is readily available and usable in many different venues. We need that now as much as ever. I think there is a greater attention to the needs of children than there has been. We are embarking in our country on many changes -- welfare reform being but one that I could mention -- that will have profound implications on how children develop. We need your expertise; we need your early warning signals; we need your advice.

And so I would ask you not only to continue your research for the sake of developing the body of knowledge that is available to experts but to do whatever you can to make sure that information is available to all of us. This is, I believe, a moment in time to intensify our commitment to understanding child development as deeply as possible and to use that emerging knowledge to the benefit of all of our children.

It is an exciting time to be studying development with all of the breakthroughs in research that have already occurred and that are on the brink of occurring. And it will be a great test of our political will, of our humanity, of our understanding of how we are all inextricably connected to see whether or not we take what we know works for children and apply it, and that we make sure that it is not just the children of people like us who benefit from the information that is available, but that we work to make society more attentive to the needs of children and

parents who might otherwise be left behind.

The two weeks that I just spent in Africa was exhilarating, challenging, exciting, sometimes depressing, but I felt at the end of that trip that it wasn't only in our country or in advanced countries that people were beginning to focus on the next generation in a way that perhaps we hadn't for the last couple of decades. Whether I was in a classroom in Soweto with young boys and girls who were learning English; or in a school in Kampala, Uganda, with 74 eight-year-olds in a classroom because the country has committed itself to increasing school enrollment, and in the space of less than a year has increased enrollment by more than 2 million; or whether I was in the newest country in Africa, Eritrea, talking with men and women who had spent 30 years fighting for their independence, and hearing how what their doing is investing in education and health care for children -- I felt that there was a commitment to what is really important among many of the people I had a chance to meet.

I feel the same when I travel in our own country: that there are many people who look at what is happening in the economy, who look at the changes that have gone on in the family, who understand the challenges that we are facing socially, and who are committed to making it possible for more children to be productive and successful in their development.

And what we have to do -- those of you who care about the work you have committed yourselves to and those of us who want to translate your work into practical application -- is to be relentless in speaking about and standing up for the needs of children, and doing all we can to take what works and spread it as widely as possible.

As we move toward this new century -- my husband is very fond of saying we do not have a person to waste -- and we must believe that, we must act on it. And you can provide an enormous amount of inspiration and information to make sure that we do.

Thank you for what you're doing on behalf of children. And please make sure that what you know is broadly known so that all the rest of us can try to make sure we leave no child behind. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

**KEY FINDINGS FROM A NATIONWIDE SURVEY AMONG
PARENTS OF ZERO- TO THREE-YEAR-OLDS**

CONDUCTED BY
PETER D. HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

FUNDED BY THE
HEINZ FAMILY FOUNDATION



National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

APRIL 1997

PETER D. HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.
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ZERO TO THREE SURVEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

1 Parents know that they have an important influence on their infants' and toddlers' development, but they do not fully understand the connection between their own parenting practices and the social, emotional, and intellectual aspects of child development.

Majorities of parents grasp certain fundamental concepts about child development, but many are confused or hold misconceptions about others.

Though they are most likely to believe that their child's *emotional* growth and development is the domain over which they have the greatest influence as parents, this aspect of early child development - along with intellectual and social development - is the area in which parents feel *least knowledgeable*.

While half of parents (53%) say they are totally sure that they know what signs to watch for in their youngster when it comes to physical development, far fewer say this for emotional (38%), social (37%), or intellectual (44%) development.

WHAT PARENTS KNOW ABOUT EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Most parents understand that babies are learning from the moment they are born; that babies are communicating before they can do so in words; that parents' *emotional* closeness with their baby can strongly affect his or her *intellectual* development; that the brain of a baby who lacks appropriate stimulation - such as being read to, played with, or touched and held - will not develop as well as that of a baby who does receive such stimulation; and that what a child experiences from birth to age three can influence his or her ability to do well in school.

Fewer parents recognize that a baby's intelligence can be increased or decreased by how parents interact with that child; that babies less than six months old can get depressed; that having more rather than fewer caregivers before age three is *not* good for a child's healthy development; and that the *more* stimulation (as opposed to *appropriate stimulation*) a baby receives does not mean he or she is better off.

2 Parents of babies and toddlers expect a great deal of themselves, and many feel that they want to improve as parents. Though many are confident in their ability to respond to the various parenting challenges they face each day, they also identify a number of barriers standing in the way of better parenting.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOURSELF AS A PARENT SO FAR?

Just 8% of parents rate themselves as "outstanding" and say they don't feel a need to improve; all others indicate that they'd like to improve their parenting skills.

Forty-seven percent say they are excellent parents but would like to improve just a little; 43% say they are good but definitely want to improve in several areas; and 2% say they are somewhat below average and are working hard at improving.

For families with children age zero to three, two fundamental barriers stand in the way of better parenting. First, from parents' own point of view, time is an acute concern, with over a third saying that one of the top reasons they may need to improve as parents is that they don't spend as much quality time with their child as they'd like to (37%).

A second critical type of barrier to better parenting is the "information deficit": one in five parents, for example, say that they feel they need to improve as a parent because they find it hard to understand their child's feelings and needs (19%) or don't know how to handle difficult situations with their child (19%). One in 10 parents say that they lack confidence in their parenting skills overall.

3 Few parents of young children say that they felt totally prepared for parenthood when they had their first child. Those who are the youngest and have the lowest income, or those who are going it alone as single parents feel particularly unprepared for the daunting new role they've taken on.

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU FIRST BECAME A PARENT?

The vast majority of parents say that when they had their first child, they felt "in love" with their baby and happier than ever before. Many also say that they felt stressed and worn out, afraid of doing something wrong, afraid of not being a good parent, and unsure about what to do a lot of the time.

Young parenthood is both a time of deep joy and wonderment and a time of worry, uncertainty, and questioning, and parents seem thirsty for information and advice to help them understand and respond to their child. Not all resources that young families typically turn to, however, provide the quantity or quality of information that parents need at present.

When parents seek information or advice about parenting, they turn to both informal networks - such as their own mother, mother-in-law, another family member, or a friend - and to professionals: namely, their child's pediatrician. They also pay significant attention to the news media's reports about infants and toddlers and their development.

A quarter of all parents of young children say that as brand new parents they felt only slightly or not really prepared, while almost two in five felt totally or quite well-prepared. Among those who are *least* likely to have felt prepared are younger, lower-income, and single parents. Low-income and single parents also are more likely than others to have felt that they lacked emotional support.

4 To be the parent of a baby or toddler as the end of the 20th century approaches is to face myriad challenges and pressures, chief among them the time crunch in trying to "be there" for that young child.

A PORTRAIT OF YOUNG FAMILIES

Sixty percent of children age zero to three currently are cared for on a regular basis by someone other than their parents. Only one in five have been cared for exclusively by their mother or father since birth.

Non-parental care providers for this age group are about equally likely to be a grandparent or other family as they are to be a professional or non-family caregiver.

Though most babies and toddlers today live in two-parent households, 14% are being raised by single parents.

The majority of mothers of very young children work at a paid job: 40% full time and 19% part time; another 8% who aren't working now plan to return to the work force within the next six months.

The facts of daily life and work for America's young families mean that about half of all parents say that they end most days feeling that they spent less time than they wanted to with their young child.

Translated into hard numbers, this finding suggests that, every day, five million infants and toddlers across the country have parents who personally feel that they don't spend enough time with them.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Comfort and Joy

The First Mom suggests reading as an easy way to help a baby's brain grow

THE NIGHT AFTER THE INAUGURAL, BILL AND I GATHERED with our family in the solarium on the third floor of the White House. After dinner our toddler nephews Tyler and Zachary climbed up on the couch with their Uncle Bill to hear him read a story. They accompanied him with words, sounds, pointed fingers and a few tussles over who would hold the book. As I watched them, I thought of all the times Bill and I used to take turns reading stories to Chelsea. Every night one of us (and occasionally both) would stretch out on her bed, hold her in our arms, and either read or make up new tales about imaginary characters who embarked on improbable but breathtaking adventures.

Bill and I did not know about brain cells or synapses or the newest discoveries in neuroscience. Reading to Chelsea became a daily ritual because it's what our own parents and grandparents had done with us, and because we wanted to spend quiet time with her every day. Bill's grandmother thought that reading to him would help him develop a strong vocabulary and the language skills he would need later on in school. My mother and father placed a similar premium on reading, and to this day I remember the feelings of security and comfort that I felt sitting in my grandfather's lap when he read stories to my brothers and me.

Today, thanks to advances in brain research, we know that reading with a child has intellectual, emotional and physical benefits that can enhance the child's development. The intimacy of sharing books and stories strengthens the emotional bonds between a parent and child, helps a child learn words and concepts, and actually stimulates the growth of a baby's brain.

As I discussed in my book, *It Takes a Village*, scientists have discovered that children whose parents read and talk to them during the first three years of life create a stronger foundation for future reading success. In other words, what our parents and grandparents knew instinctively is now backed up by hard scientific evidence.

That's why doctors and nurses are starting to prescribe reading to babies along with regular checkups and vaccinations. Recently I went to Georgetown University's Medical Center with Maurice Sendak, the renowned children's author and illustrator. His book *Where the Wild Things Are* was one of Chelsea's—and Bill's—favorites. Mr. Sendak read the story to children, and I announced, along with representatives of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Booksellers Associ-

ation and the American Library Association, a national campaign to put books in the hands of parents who bring their young children to the doctor, and to get doctors to prescribe daily reading. My husband and I will be discussing this and other activities to follow up on the latest findings about the brain at a White House conference in the spring.

It's important that we take to heart what the neuroscientists are telling us—without losing the heart of the reading experience. In today's high-tech world of E-mail and microchips, it is easy to forget the importance of human connections in our daily activities. Technology has brought many welcome conveniences to our lives. But it has the potential to create feelings of distance, detachment and isolation among us.

Reading to a child while touching, hugging and holding him or her can be a wonderful antidote to the im-

personal tendencies of the information age—for both the adult and the child. While critical to building brains, reading is equally important to building trusting and close relationships. That's why many of us remember the warm embrace or the comfortable lap that cradled us when we read books as children. And that's why reading should not be viewed solely as an intellectual proposition, particularly in the era in which we now live.

If Americans take away only one lesson from these exciting scientific discoveries, I hope it's that reading to children is easy, affordable and feasible for parents no matter what their level of education or economic station in life. Children's books are available for free at public libraries in every community and can be found at reasonable prices in many bookstores. Doctors, librarians, teachers, book publishers, business leaders and the news media can help make books available to families and educate parents about the vital role that reading plays in our children's lives.

It isn't very often that we have before us such a simple, inexpensive and pleasurable way to improve our children's health and development and raise their prospects for a brighter future. Whether you lie down together on the rug, sit together in an old rocking chair or cuddle on your child's bed the way Bill and I used to with Chelsea, there is no better way to spend time than reading to your child.

And now we also know that there are few better ways to help your baby's brain grow. ■



Mrs. Clinton with her daughter in the crucial first three years

DOING THE BEST FOR OUR KIDS

The First Lady calls for Americans to work together and give parents the tools they need to raise their children—and provide them with a lifetime of learning

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS THAT TIME HASN'T always been an ally to us parents. As Bill and I have discovered at every birthday and every milestone in our daughter Chelsea's life, months and years fly much faster than we ever want. Like other parents bracing themselves for a child's departure for college, we ask ourselves every day: "How did the baby we brought home from the hospital grow up so fast?" "Is there any way we can move the White House to her college campus?"

Of course, we know that Chelsea is ready to begin a new phase of her life and that college will be a great experience. But it still doesn't keep us from reviewing the past 17 years and wondering if we've made the most of every minute to prepare her for the challenges of adulthood.

As science is now telling us, some of the most important preparation we can give our children takes place during the earliest years of life. New research has confirmed what many parents have known instinctively: infants begin learning the minute they are born. They are acutely aware of their surroundings and their brains crave and absorb all sorts of stimulation. Recently we have learned that the combination of intellectual and emotional interactions with infants and toddlers—holding a child in your lap while reading a story, for example—is crucial to their learning and emotional development.

Although Bill and I didn't realize it at the time, the countless hours we spent cuddling with Chelsea and reading her favorite stories not only strengthened our relationship with her but literally helped her brain grow.

Unfortunately, too many children are still missing this early stimulation. Just half of all infants and toddlers in our country are routinely read to by their parents. Over the years I have met parents who tell me they never really talk to their babies because babies can't understand what they are saying. I've also met parents who thought that they

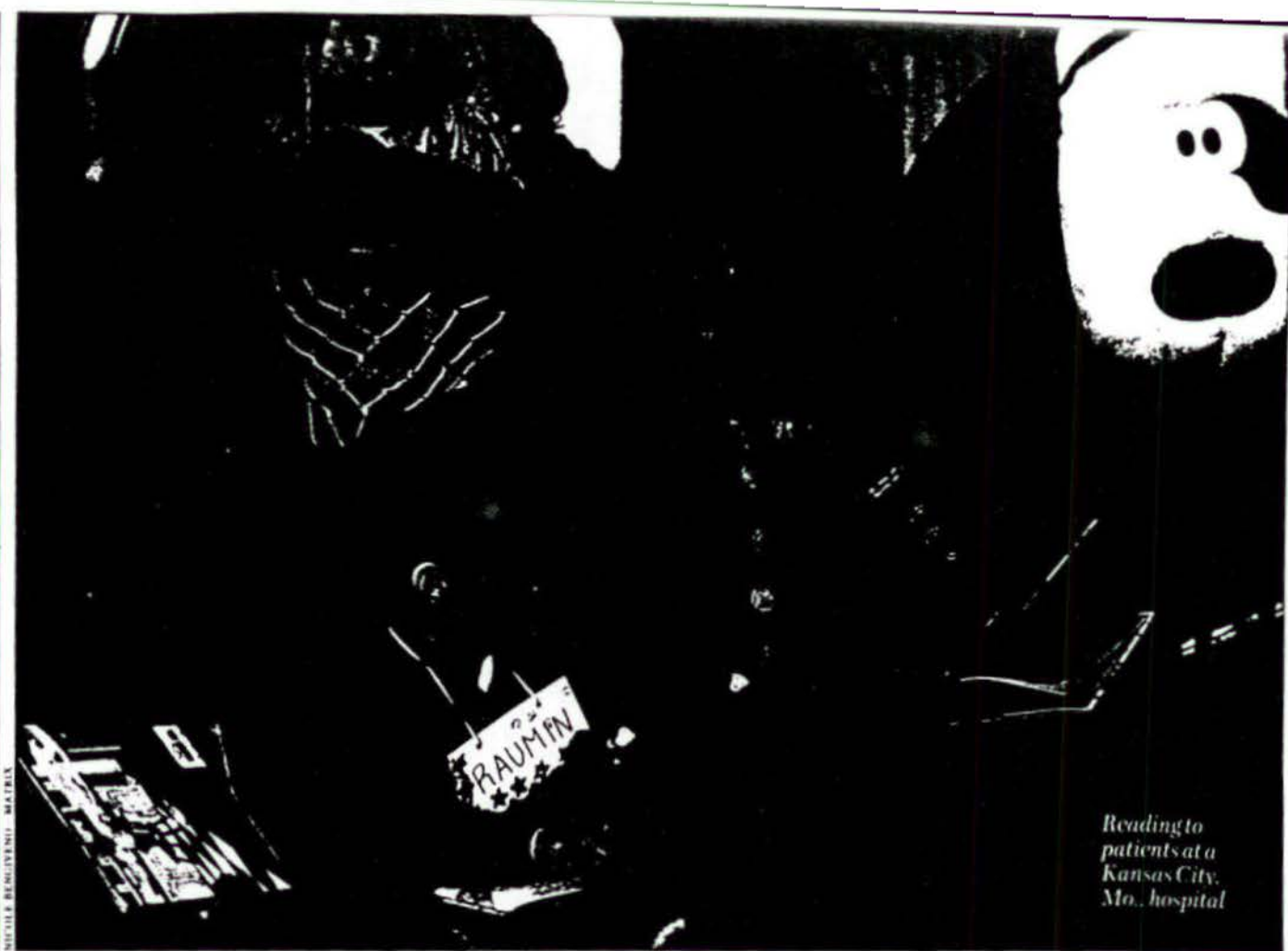
couldn't read well enough themselves to read to a child.

We must help parents understand that, no matter their educational level or reading ability, they can stimulate their children's cognitive and emotional development by talking to and reading to their children, even if they stumble over a few words here and there. Most likely, their children won't even notice. But they will notice the power of reading and the books to take them on fascinating adventures and introduce them to the world of words and ideas. And just as important, they will notice the time a parent has set aside to be with them, to hold them close and to share in a nurturing activity.

Earlier this year, I announced a nationwide effort to encourage early reading in homes across our country. I believe that few efforts can make a more dramatic difference over the next 10 years than to persuade parents of all educational and economic backgrounds to take this mission of reading, talking—and even singing—to babies more seriously.

At the same time, parents shouldn't go overboard. A friend of mine told me that he became so obsessed with making sure that he and his son finished reading two books a day that he rarely stopped for questions or allowed his son to look closely at the pictures. And mothers and fathers don't need to feel that they have to rush out and read the latest scientific paper on human brain development for exact instructions on how to interact with their children.

The point is that learning is a lifelong proposition—one that, in the best of worlds, begins at the earliest stages and continues for years. Yes, the first three years of life are crucial, but they are not the only time that parents need to be engaged with their children or help them develop the skills they need to progress in the world. We should not use this new research to ignore the learning needs of older children and adults. I thought about this recently when I visited Robben Island in South Africa, the prison where Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were jailed for many years.



Reading to
patients at a
Kansas City,
Mo., hospital

As Chelsea gets ready to leave for college, Bill and I can't help reviewing the past 17 years; we wonder if we've made the most of every minute to prepare her for the challenges of adulthood

While doing hard labor in a nearby limestone quarry, literate prisoners taught their fellow inmates to read by writing letters and words in the dust with their shovels and picks. One prisoner who learned to read that way went on to educate himself and now is a top official in the South African government.

My greatest hope is that we can find effective ways to apply the knowledge we are gaining from science and make it more easily available to parents. It seems as if every day more new information is piled on top of what already exists about how our children develop and what they need most to grow. And yet many parents lack access to this research and others aren't sure how to interpret it. What little information they do get comes in bits and pieces, with little guidance about how to apply it to benefit their children. This month, the president and I are convening a first-ever White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. Our aim is to bring together parents, scientists, policymakers, educators, business leaders and child-care providers to dis-

cuss the new research on the brain and early-childhood development and explore how we can deliver this information to more homes.

Many things can conspire against parents as they try to provide children with the attention and stimulation they need to develop. Parents are often stretched for time and resources, and can use all the help they can get.

As I've been saying for years, it does take a village to raise a child. That's why we can all work together to make sure parents have the tools they need to raise their children—whether it is providing information about the importance of reading and talking to children in the early years, strengthening prenatal care, expanding Head Start or ensuring access to affordable, high-quality child care.

Our children have so much potential to grow and thrive throughout their childhood. Wherever there is patience, love and commitment, the window of opportunity for raising a healthy, happy and well-adjusted child never closes. ■



April 16, 1997
3 p.m. (EST)

Marjorie Tharp
202/347-8600
800/336-5475

PRESS STATEMENT
on
PRESCRIPTION FOR READING

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that pediatricians prescribe reading activities along with the other instructions given to parents at the time of well-child visits.

Pediatricians are uniquely educated and positioned, through regular health supervision visits with infants and children, to advise parents on ways to stimulate and support their child's cognitive growth and to evaluate their progress over time.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is pleased to join with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and other key organizations in promoting reading skills as one of the building blocks to early childhood development (birth to age three). These are just a few of the ways the AAP will join the effort:

- * providing a prototype prescription pad for AAP members that prescribes daily reading to children beginning at six months of age;
- * providing models of community outreach programs, such as Reach Out and Read, whereby pediatricians can either distribute books or provide vouchers for books to families as appropriate;
- * developing checklists for parents on developmental milestones so that they too, can measure growth and development of their child.
- * encouraging pediatricians to heighten activities in their practice and/or teaching responsibilities so that they can increasingly become part of the standard of quality comprehensive care for our children.

-more-

PRESCRIPTION FOR READING
2-2-2

- * assuring that pediatricians are provided with current research and educational materials as it becomes available.

Normally, children visit their pediatricians or other provider for checkups at least 12 times during the first three years of life. Each of these office visits give pediatricians an important opportunity to consider the child's total health and well-being. Examining a child's vision, hearing, emotional and physical growth are extremely important developmental parameters to measure during these visits. Pediatricians can also advise parents on optimal parent-child interaction and other elements integral to a child's intellectual and personality development such as: nutrition; developmentally stimulating activities like reading; early identification of developmental problems; and a positive environment.

Parents of children older than 3 should also remember that opportunities abound throughout childhood to impact positively on their development and well-being, and that regular assessment of progress is essential.

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 53,000 pediatricians dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 17, 1997

CONTACT: Jim Hill
510-271-2605

**Kaiser Permanente Announces Major CEO Summit On
What Businesses Can Do To Help Young Children**

(Washington, DC – April 17, 1997) On the heels of the release of breakthrough research demonstrating the importance of the first three years of life in children's emotional and intellectual growth, Kaiser Permanente announced today that it will host a national summit of business leaders to explore and develop strategies to support the healthy development of young children.

The announcement was made by David Lawrence, MD, Chairman and CEO of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc. and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals during today's White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. Yesterday, Dr. Lawrence announced his organization's support for the newly created *I Am Your Child* Campaign – a broad based coalition of businesses, foundations, elected officials, entertainment leaders, and health and early childhood experts that is working to promote family and community involvement in young children's healthy development.

Lawrence said a broad range of business leaders will be invited to the CEO Summit which will be held in the fall of 1997. "There are a number of corporations already involved in this important endeavor. We want to build and expand upon that list – by bringing in the leaders of America's companies that are recognized for their commitment to their employees and their communities," he added.

Recent research has shown that a child's brain grows more between birth and age three than at any other time, and brain patterns created during these early years affect every aspect of life, all the way through adulthood.

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"The health care and business community has an important role to play during this critical time in a child's development," said Lawrence.

"The CEO summit will address three keys issues," added Lawrence. "First, what can businesses do to help their own employees ensure proper development of their young children? Second, what can businesses do to help their communities promote early childhood development? And third, are there special roles and responsibilities for businesses involved in health care?"

In addition, Lawrence said childhood advocacy organizations will be involved in the Summit, helping identify ways that business and health care providers can better meet the needs of young children during this important time.

Kaiser Permanente, one of America's leading health care organizations, has 10,000 physicians and nearly 8 million members in 17 states and the District of Columbia. As the nation's largest non-profit health care organization, Kaiser Permanente invests significant resources in medical research, physician training, health education, and other efforts to improve the health of its members and local communities.

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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
PRESCRIPTION FOR READING ANNOUNCEMENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
APRIL 16, 1997

I am delighted to welcome each of you to the White House. Today, I am pleased to announce the Prescription for Reading Partnership, a new national effort which we believe will make an important difference in the lives of children and families all across our country. Through this partnership, pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers, libraries and literacy organizations, many of whom are represented in this room, have pledged to work together to encourage and enable more parents across our country read to their children regularly.

As many of you know, this is a crucial task. New research has shown that talking and reading to infants and toddlers is vital to their neurological, intellectual, and emotional development. Time spent sharing a favorite book with a child -- even a newborn -- strengthens the bond between a parent and child, prepares him or her for reading, and literally helps a baby's brain grow.

Unfortunately, too many children are still missing this early stimulation. Over the years I have heard parents -- parents who clearly want to do everything they can for their children -- tell me they never really talked to their babies because they thought the infants were too young to understand what they were saying. I've met parents who believed that they could not read well enough to read a book to a child.

We have to help parents understand that, no matter their educational level or reading ability, they can stimulate their children's emotional and intellectual growth by talking to and reading to their children, even when they stumble over a few words here or there. Most likely, their children won't even notice. But they *will* notice the power of reading and books to take them on fascinating adventures and introduce them to interesting ideas.

Today's initiative was inspired by the national Reach Out and Read program and the American Library Association's Born to Read program. Both efforts recognized the vital role the medical community could play in encouraging parents to read to their infants and toddlers. Doctors are often the first professionals our children see on a regular basis. While parents may not take a child to a library or a preschool program until he or she is three, they will most likely take a child to a doctor or a nurse for vaccinations and checkups. These regular visits present medical professionals with important opportunities to instill good reading and learning habits -- along with good health habits -- in parents and children.

So it makes sense for our doctors and health professionals to use their authority and influence -- yes, those white uniforms and stethoscopes -- to "prescribe" daily reading to young patients and their parents during every visit. Research has shown that these prescriptions are followed: Parents and children who are given books by their doctors are more likely to read

aloud at home.

When I first heard about these efforts to "prescribe" reading and provide books to low-income families, I was very impressed. I realized that it was an idea that could easily be brought to many more children and parents in communities all across our country. So I wrote about it in my book and in Time magazine, talked about it in visits to hospitals, and, earlier this year, invited representatives from the health, library and publishing communities to come to the White House to discuss ways to make this a truly national effort.

The national Prescription for Reading Partnership is the result of these discussions. With the leadership of Reach Out and Read, Scholastic, Inc. and First Book, as well as the hard work of so many others represented here, we have built a diverse coalition of organizations who have pledged to make this idea a reality in doctors' offices, hospitals and health clinics across the country.

These commitments come from the worlds of publishing, medicine, health, and even, television. And I'd like to take a few moments to highlight some of them:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics will formally recommend to its 53,000 members that they make prescribing reading part of standard pediatric care and well-child visits. They have also agreed to provide their members with specially-designed reading prescription pads -- slightly smaller versions of the one in this room.
- The Reach Out and Read National Training Center at Boston Medical Center will train 10,000 pediatricians and pediatric residents by the year 2000 to implement the program in their communities. Under the Reach Out and Read program, volunteers read to children in waiting rooms while health care providers prescribe reading, use books in well-child exams, and give books to children at the end of each visit.
- The National Association of Community Health Centers' 950 members will implement Reach Out and Read programs in centers serving a total of one million parents and children by the year 2000. In a similar effort, the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions will challenge its members to triple the number of hospitals using Reach Out And Read.
- Scholastic, Inc., has promised to contribute 100,000 new books to health care professionals and clinics participating in the Reach Out and Read or the Born to Read programs. Scholastic's pledge is part of its already-announced commitment to provide one million books to the President's America Reads challenge. The company has also promised to match new donations to the Partnership with additional books.
- In addition to working tirelessly to bring all of today's groups together, First Book, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing disadvantaged children with their own

books, has also donated 100,000 books to the effort.

- Another publishing company, Random House, will contribute 5,000 books **a month** for twelve months to Reach Out and Read
- The American Library Association will work with the nation's 16,000 public libraries to establish Born to Read programs with health professionals in their communities. And let me add my own call to our country's health clinics and libraries to work together to make sure every child has books to read and people to read to them.
- The National Association of Chain Drug Stores and the National Community Pharmacists Association will distribute reading tips and suggested book titles to parents who visit their pharmacies.
- I'd also like to thank the Association of American Publishers, The American Booksellers Association, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Irving Harris and the Harris Foundation of Chicago, Mellon Trust, the Dreyfus Corporation, Reading Is Fundamental and ABC Television for their individual commitments to the Partnership.

These commitments are just the beginning. I have no doubt the Partnership, which seems to be growing everyday, will also help our children grow and develop their full potential to learn, to feel, to communicate and relate to others. It will also bring us a giant step closer to answering the President's America Reads challenge to make sure that every child can read independently by the end of third grade. Early reading at home, in the comfort of a parent's lap, is some of the most important preparation a child can have for reading in school. That's why the President has made the Parents as First Teachers Grants a vital part of the America Reads Challenge proposal.

But let's remember that it won't take just parents, but all of us to make sure every child reaches his or her full potential. I thank all of you for recognizing the important roles you could play in bringing books into more homes, preparing children for the future and serving your communities.

Tomorrow, leading neuroscientists, pediatricians, child development specialists, child care providers, business and religious leaders from across the country will be gathering here to discuss the new and exciting scientific discoveries about the brain and early childhood development. One of the primary goals of the White House Conference is to find ways to put the research to practical use, and to call upon all sectors of society to make sure our children benefit from this new knowledge. I believe that the Prescription for Reading Partnership is one of the best answers to that call. It is a wonderful way to begin our conference.

Now I'd like to introduce Dr. Robert Hanneman, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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

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

New Partnership to Prescribe Reading and Ensure That Children Who Come to the Doctor Have Access to Books. The First Lady is pleased to announce that a new national partnership has been created to prescribe reading to infants and toddlers. Pediatricians, hospitals, health centers, book publishers, libraries and others are coming together to make sure that infants and toddlers who come to the doctor have access to books and are read to regularly. The American Academy of Pediatrics is recommending that pediatricians prescribe reading to infants and toddlers as part of standard pediatric care.

The New Partnership Has Already Secured:

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

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

The Partnership, Led by Scholastic Inc., First Book, and Reach Out and Read, includes the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of Community Health Centers, National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions, American Library Association, Random House, Irving Harris and the Harris Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, American Booksellers Association, Association of American Publishers, Mellon Trust, Dreyfus Corporation, ABC Television, Reading Is Fundamental, National Association of Chain Drug Stores, and the National Community Pharmacists Association, and seeks additional partners.

Under the Reach Out and Read program, volunteers read to children in waiting rooms, health care providers prescribe reading, use books in well-visits, and give books to children at the end of a visit. This model program is already being used in more than 80 health centers and hospitals around the country.

Call to Ensure That by the Year 2000 Every Child Under Age Five Is Read to Regularly. The First Lady is calling for every community to come together using its local library in partnership with local health providers to help encourage reading to young children and ensure that every child under age five is read to regularly by the year 2000. Today, only 39% of parents with children under three read to their children daily [Commonwealth Fund, 1996]. Research shows that when doctors prescribe reading and give books to low-income parents and their children, these parents are *four times* more likely to read to their children [AMA, AJDC, 8/91].

The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning Will Underscore the Importance of Reading to Infants and Toddlers. *The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children* will explore new research that shows that reading to children in their first few years actually helps their brain to grow in addition to enhancing their emotional and social development and laying the groundwork for vocabulary and later educational success.



April 16, 1997
3 p.m. (EST)

Marjorie Tharp
202/347-8600
800/336-5475

PRESS STATEMENT
on
PRESCRIPTION FOR READING

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-more-

PRESCRIPTION FOR READING
2-2-2

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For Immediate Release

PRESS INFORMATION

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SCHOLASTIC INC. EXTENDS CHALLENGE GRANT
IN SUPPORT OF FIRST LADY'S
PRESCRIPTION FOR READING PARTNERSHIP

White House Ceremony Announces Book Donation and Challenge Grant

Washington, D.C. — April 16, 1997 -- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, in order to ensure that every child under the age of five is being read to regularly by the year 2000, announced in an afternoon press conference at the White House, a partnership with the medical community, literacy organizations and publishers for a new early literacy initiative "*Prescription for Reading*." Scholastic was named one of the three leaders of the initiative, along with the literacy organization First Book and the pediatrician group Reach Out and Read.

In support of the *Prescription for Reading* partnership, Scholastic has announced:

- o The contribution of 100,000 books to be distributed to children via pediatricians participating in the Reach Out and Read Program.
- o A challenge grant of 100,000 additional books for every \$1 million contributed to Reach Out and Read.
- o A commitment to see the new Rosemary Wells book, *Read to Your Bunny*, provided free to parents participating in the *Prescription for Reading* partnership. Scholastic expects to announce underwriting for the book in the coming weeks.

"Scholastic is honored to have been chosen as a partner in the *Prescription for Reading* program," said Richard Robinson, President & CEO, Scholastic, Inc. "Scholastic's mission has always been to improve and support literacy for children and parents. We are pleased and honored to support the First Lady in meeting her literacy goals for the entire nation."

The *Prescription for Reading* partnership is a coalition of groups dedicated to extending the highly successful Reach Out and Read model to all children under the age of six. Pediatricians will have the resources available to prescribe reading to all children who visit their doctor, ensuring stimulation of the brain and increased growth while preventing illiteracy, failure in school and dependency.

For more than 75 years, Scholastic has been committed to creating quality educational materials for students, teachers and families. The company is one of the leading publishers and distributors of children's books, classroom and professional magazines and core curriculum materials. Scholastic also publishes educational software and produces children's and family-oriented video and television programming. The company's international operations include Australia, Canada, France, Mexico, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

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National Association of
Community Health Centers, Inc.®

FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997

CONTACT: DAN HAWKINS
(202) 659-8008

**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS PLEDGE TO BRING
EARLY READING PROGRAMS TO 1 MILLION CHILDREN
IN NEEDY INNER-CITY, RURAL COMMUNITIES**

WASHINGTON, DC. -- The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) announced today that its member Health Centers throughout the country will work in partnership with other key literacy and health care organizations to establish Reach Out and Read programs reaching at least 1 million parents and children by the year 2000.

"It is crystal clear to us," said NACHC Policy Director Dan Hawkins, "that because of where Health Centers are located and whom they serve, their communities - and the children they care for - have the most to gain from early reading programs." Mr. Hawkins noted that 950 Community Health Centers serve nearly 10 million low income children and adults living in medically underserved urban and rural communities in every state and the District of Columbia. More than 2 million of their patients are pre-school children -- the target population for the President's *America Reads* challenge.

"The evidence is compelling that having parents read to infants and toddlers can make a huge difference in their intellectual development," stated Dr. Thomas Curtin, MD, Director of Health Professions and Clinical Affairs for NACHC, "and making this an integral part of our pediatric patient care makes eminent sense." Health Centers already use interdisciplinary teams of physicians, other health professionals, and community residents to offer a wide range of primary and preventive medical and dental care, as well as health education, community outreach, transportation, and support programs (including literacy and other educational programs) in collaboration with other organizations and agencies like schools, Head Start programs, and homeless shelters.

"We applaud the President and First Lady for their leadership in this vital undertaking," said NACHC National Chairman James Couch of Atlanta, "and we pledge to do all we can to make this an overwhelming success. We do so especially because it is the right thing to do, for our children and our communities." Mr. Couch added that Health Centers contribute to the strength and well being of their communities in several ways, keeping children healthy and in school and helping adults to remain productive at work. They employ more than 50,000 persons, many of whom are community residents, and help to retain other local businesses and stabilize neighborhoods by stimulating community and economic development. And they make a difference in the health of the people they serve, with studies crediting them for reducing infant mortality, improving immunization and prenatal care rates, and increasing the use of preventive health services among their patients.

Mellon Trust

Mellon Trust has a long history in Boston, tracing its roots to 1875 when its Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company unit was founded. Since then, the financial services firm has invested in the community by supporting hundreds of nonprofit organizations in Greater Boston.

Mellon Trust has consistently channeled its philanthropic resources and those of its 43 charitable trusts to education. The firm's community donations have included several aspects of education, including early childhood development, public education and cultural access for low-income students.

The company first supported the Reach Out and Read program in 1995. In keeping with Mellon Trust's tradition of forming partnerships with the organizations it supports, Mellon Trust employees have volunteered their time by reading to children who visit the pediatric ward at Boston Medical Center, located in the city's South End and serving primarily low-income residents of Boston. Mellon Trust has also provided financial support to the program.

Leveraging its strength as a well capitalized financial institution, Mellon Trust provides equity investments in affordable housing, originates mortgages for low- and moderate-income individuals, and sponsors community credit education programs.

Mellon Trust is the investment services arm of Pittsburgh-based Mellon Bank Corporation, a leading financial services company which shares a long tradition of charitable support for the communities it serves. Mellon Trust's primary areas of business are private and institutional asset management, jumbo mortgage lending, and institutional trust and custody. With over \$1 trillion in assets under administration and \$153 billion in assets under management, Mellon Trust is a major provider of trust and investment management services.

**The Prescription for Reading Initiative
From Carnegie Corporation of New York
Michael Levine**

The research on early learning is clear and compelling. Parents and other caregivers who read and tell stories to young children on a regular basis, beginning during infancy and throughout the preschool years, are providing a firm foundation for school readiness and long-term academic success. The "Prescription for Reading" plan that will use trusted health professionals to encourage early reading at home and in community programs is very promising. The connection between young children's health care and their education is inextricable, but often ignored. The multi-sector partnership announced today will help forge new and important ties.

ALA American Library Association

NEWS

April 16, 1997

Contact: Joyce Kelly/Linda Wallace
312-280-5043/5042

American Library Association applauds White House focus on early childhood learning; pledges support

The president of the American Library Association (ALA) says the new focus on preschool learning announced by President Clinton today could make a difference in the lives of millions of children.

"We greatly appreciate the President and First Lady's leadership in recognizing what librarians have been saying for a long time -- it's never too soon to start reading to your child," said ALA President Mary R. Somerville.

She cited the "Born to Read" demonstration project administered by the Association for Library Service to Children as an example of how librarians teach parents how to share stories, songs and word play with young children to stimulate their mental development.

The association has set a goal of establishing "Born to Read" projects at all 16,000 public libraries to reach out to parents of the 4 million babies born each year. Launched in 1993 with a grant from the Prudential Foundation, the "Born to Read" project promotes partnerships between libraries and health care providers to help new parents raise children who are healthy in body and

-more-

mind. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is honorary chair.

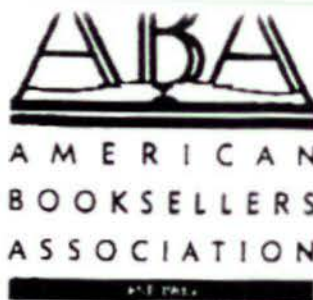
Somerville noted that public libraries have had preschool story hours and children's rooms for more than a century. Many librarians also offer special collections, recommended book lists and classes to help parents share books with their children.

"All parents can give their children a head start on life and learning at the library," said Somerville. "All it takes is a library card."

Somerville said the American Library Association has received countless letters from people of all ages and backgrounds who credit childhood experiences in the library for helping them to develop a lifelong love of reading and to further their education outside the classroom.

The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world with 58,000 members. Based in Chicago, its mission is to promote the highest quality library services and to ensure that Americans of all ages have books and other resources they need to live, learn, work and govern.

The Association for Library Service to Children is a division of the American Library Association. For information about Born to Read, tips on how to raise a reader and recommended books for children, see the ALSC Web page at <http://www.ala.org/alsc> or call 800-545-2433, ext. 1398.



For Release: Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Contact: Oren J. Teicher
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914 591-2665, ext. 267
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ABA JOINS PRESCRIPTION FOR READING EFFORT

The American Booksellers Association, the national trade association of the retail book business, announced today that it will recruit 50,000 reading tutors and other volunteers for the AMERICA READS CHALLENGE, linking volunteers to health care professionals and other literacy programs that emphasize the critical importance of early childhood reading.

The recruitment drive will be launched in conjunction with BookExpo America, to be held in Chicago, May 30th-June 2nd, 1997. Book Expo America, known formerly as the ABA Convention & Trade Exhibit, is the largest annual gathering of book industry personnel in the United States - attracting as many as 25,000 people. Additionally, any new children's books remaining after the closing of BookExpo America will be donated to Reach Out and Read Program.

The tutors and volunteers will be recruited from the employees and customers of ABA's 3700 member bookstores all across the country. Recruitment material is being developed through the cooperation of Scholastic, Inc., the Association of American Publishers, and BookExpo America.

"Participation in this effort is a logical follow-up on our earlier joint program with the Association of Booksellers For Children (ABC), *The Most Important Twenty Minutes of Your Day*, which was designed to encourage parents and guardians to read to their children" said Valerie Lewis, a former ABC officer, current ABA Board Member, and co-owner of Hickabee's Children's Bookstore in San Jose, Ca.

Additionally, in conjunction with the regional office of the Department of Health and Human Services in Federal Region #2, the ABA offices in Tarrytown, NY will be one of the sites for the "downlink" of the "White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children" on Thursday, April 17th.

Founded in 1900, The American Booksellers Association represents the broad interests of book retailers. A central part of it's mission is to promote "the benefits of reading and universal literacy." ABA is governed by a Board of twenty volunteer booksellers from all across the country, has a staff of 45, and is headquartered in Tarrytown, New York.



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news

Random House
Children's Publishing

Alfred A. Knopf
Books for Young Readers

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Books for Young Readers

RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING

Random House Children's Publishing, the preeminent publisher of books for children in America today, has announced that it will donate 60,000 books to Reach Out and Read, a pediatrician outreach program that encourages parents to read to their children. Pediatricians agree that reading to a child is a critical aspect in cognitive development and that the earlier it starts the better. It is the hope of Random House Children's Publishing that this donation will help Reach Out and Read move closer to having each and every parent and child have access to books at an early age, thereby fostering a life-long love and joy of reading.

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
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Statement of Ruth Graves, President, Reading Is Fundamental

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), the nation's oldest and largest children's literacy organization, will reach nearly 4 million children this year ensuring that each receives at least three new books of their own. Among those served are tens of thousands of America's youngest and neediest children in health clinics, immunization programs, hospitals, and Reach Out and Read programs.

"Prescription for Reading" naturally complements the work of RIF's dedicated force of 219,000 community volunteers. As a collaborative effort of existing literacy programs, pediatricians, librarians, booksellers, parents and business leaders, "Prescription for Reading" will play a positive role in making reading a family priority.

RIF is committed to helping all children grow up reading and pledges that by the end of the year 2000, RIF will provide its reading program and books to an additional 200,000 of America's youngest children.

RICHARD ROBINSON
Chairman of the Board, President
and Chief Executive Officer
Scholastic Corp.

RICHARD ROBINSON, Chairman of the Board, President, and Chief Executive Officer of Scholastic Inc., who began his career as a high school English teacher in Evanston, Illinois, joined Scholastic in 1962 as an Assistant Editor of *Literary Cavalcade* magazine and then Editor of Scholastic's Literature Units. In 1964, he founded the company's most successful periodical, *Scope*, a high-interest English reading magazine, for which he served as Editor until 1966, when he became Editorial Director for Scholastic's English and Language Arts Department, including four magazines, text programs, and book clubs.

In April, 1971, he became Vice President and Publisher for Scholastic's School Division, comprising 80% of the company's business and was elected the company's President in 1974 and Chief Executive Officer in March, 1975. After the death of his father, M.R. Robinson, the company's founder in 1920, he was elected to the additional position of Chairman of the Board in March, 1982.

Since 1980, under Mr. Robinson's direction, Scholastic has moved substantially into the new technologies in education. The company now publishes two magazines in the computer field, *Electronic Learning* for educators and *Home Office Computing*, published for users of personal computers at home. The company is also the largest publisher of classroom magazines and children's books in the English-speaking world, as well as a leading publisher of supplementary texts and sponsored educational materials.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in May, 1937, Mr. Robinson is a magna cum laude/Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard College and studied at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge University, England and Teachers College, Columbia.

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Perri Klass, M.D. is a pediatrician who serves as Medical Director of Reach Out and Read at Boston Medical Center, where she is Assistant Professor of Pediatrics. She has trained pediatricians in Boston and around the country in literacy development, in how to counsel parents about books and looking at books with their children, and in how to integrate books and literacy into routine pediatric care. Dr. Klass also has a pediatric primary care practice at Dorchester House, a neighborhood health center in Boston, where she is part of an active health center Reach Out and Read program, giving books to patients at their well-child visits.

Dr. Klass is an extensively published writer, whose most recent books include Other Women's Children, a novel, and Baby Doctor: A Pediatrician's Training, a collection of essays. Her short stories have won five O. Henry Awards and have been widely anthologized, and her essays and journalism have appeared in The New York Times Magazine, Parenting, Discover, Esquire, American Health, and many other newspapers and magazines.

Through her work with Reach Out and Read, Dr. Klass has been able to integrate her commitment to the health care of young children with her love of books, stories, and the written word. In an essay on the program, she wrote, "When I think about children growing up in homes without books, I have the same visceral reaction as I have when I think of children in homes without milk or food or heat: It cannot be, it must not be. It stunts them and deprives them before they've had a fair chance."

DR. ERNEST B. FLEISHMAN
Senior Vice President, Education

Dr. Ernest B. Fleishman is the Senior Vice President for Education for Scholastic Inc., one of the nation's largest publishers and distributors of children's books, classroom and professional magazines, educational software, and instructional materials.

Dr. Fleishman's role at Scholastic includes developing company-wide strategic initiatives with school districts, government agencies and corporations. He directs the Company's professional relations with the schools and with major educational organizations and carries out the Company's business/education partnerships including the connection with the National Alliance of Business. He oversees Scholastic's participation in the newly developed sponsorship of the National Teacher of the Year program, conducted by Scholastic and the Council of Chief State School Officers. In addition, Dr. Fleishman chairs Scholastic's National Advisory Council.

Dr. Fleishman is also Publisher of *America's Agenda*, Scholastic's publication for top leaders in education, business and government.

Previously at Scholastic, Dr. Fleishman supervised all creative and editorial efforts of Scholastic's 30 classroom magazines, and the Company's Educational Marketing Group.

Dr. Fleishman's background includes more than 30 years in education. He began as an English teacher in New High School, Newton, Massachusetts. Dr. Fleishman was the Assistant to the Superintendent of Pittsburgh Public Schools while also serving as the Director of Project Upward Bound and Lecturer in Education at Carnegie-Mellon University. From 1968-1976, he served as Superintendent of Schools for Ridgewood, New Jersey and the Central Bucks School District in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. He served as Superintendent of Schools in Greenwich, Connecticut from 1976-1989.

Dr. Fleishman received his B.A. from Williams College, and his M.A., Teaching of English, and Ed.D. in Administration from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Williams College in 1984.

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CHRISTINE BENERO

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Christine Benero is the Chief Executive Officer of First Book, a nation non-profit organization committed to giving disadvantaged children their own new books to read and to keep. First Book works with existing community-based tutoring, mentoring, and family-literacy programs to reach the hardest-to-reach children. In 1997 First Book will deliver nearly two million new books to children who need them the most.

Christine received her Masters of Education degree from Harvard University and currently serves as the Chair of the Coalition for America's Children.



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National Association of
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and Related Institutions

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(b)(6)

COO13

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Dr. Haecker is a pediatrician and Medical Director of the Reach Out and Read program at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and a member of the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions. Dr. Haecker helped start the ROR program at CHOP in September of 1996. It is now operating in CHOP's three urban primary care centers and is part of the residency training for all CHOP pediatric residents. Since the program's inception, Dr. Haecker has also helped raise more than \$100,000 to expand Reach Out and Read and purchase books. At the April 16 Prescription for Reading event, Dr. Haecker is representing NACHRI and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where she is also medical director of primary care and medical director of children's health services.



ROBERT E. HANNEMANN, MD, FAAP
1996-97 President
American Academy of Pediatrics

Robert Hannemann, MD, FAAP, of Lafayette, Indiana is the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Dr. Hannemann currently practices general pediatrics at a multispecialty clinic in Lafayette, Indiana. He also holds visiting professorships in chemical engineering and child psychology at Purdue University and is an assistant in pediatrics at Indiana University Medical Center.

Dr. Hannemann is currently a member of the AAP Board of Directors and has served as Indiana chapter president and alternate district chairperson for AAP District V. He also has been active in many Academy committees and programs, including the Task Force on Promotion of Pediatrics, the selection committee for the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities Medical Award of Excellence and the Graduate Medical Education Advisory Committee.

Dr. Hannemann is a member of the AAP sections on Perinatology, Adolescent Medicine and Community Pediatrics. He also is associate medical editor of the AAP book, *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5* (Bantam).

A graduate of Indiana University's medical school, Dr. Hannemann served a rotating internship at Indianapolis Methodist Hospital. His pediatric subspecialty training was at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. In 1964, he was certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and became a member of the Academy.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 51,000 pediatricians dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

National Center For Family Literacy

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March 12, 1998

The First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton
Office of the First Lady
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
2nd Floor, West Wing
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

We applaud you and President Clinton's continued efforts to make education an important issue in this country. I read with interest your recent article in the *Washington Post* titled "Fight literacy's decline by reading to your child." NCFL was founded on the premise that when parents and children learn together, they become successful families. We support the America Reads Challenge and special programs such as Read Across America wholeheartedly.

It's also important to note that no matter how much we as educators and policymakers stress the importance of reading and talking to their children, most parents who cannot read are not prepared to pick a book and begin. They simply don't know how. In essence, it does matter if a parent cannot read for obvious reasons, but also because if they can't read, chances are they do not have the self-confidence to read to their children.

A quote from a *NEA Today* article that appeared in 1995 said it best, the headline read "You think America's millions of functionally illiterate adults aren't your problem? Think again: they have kids." Children of undereducated parents are twice as likely as other kids to be undereducated themselves.

Your article's general message is excellent and timeless. We as a nation can no longer afford the price of undereducation. Thank you for keeping this issue "up close and personal."

Best wishes,

Sharon Darling
President

cc. Press

**First Lady Launches Chicago's Citywide Expansion of Reach Out and Read and Receives the
Prescription for Reading Partnership's First Annual Report
April 28, 1998**

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

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

Today, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will help launch a citywide effort to expand Reach Out and Read to all Chicago public health clinics and community-based health centers and will receive the Prescription for Reading Partnership's first annual report. Last year, the First Lady challenged booksellers, publishers, libraries, hospitals, pediatricians, health centers, and others to work together to make sure that infants and toddlers who come to the doctor have access to books and are read to regularly. Today's announcement builds on the commitments made last year to the First Lady by the Prescription for Reading Partnership.

Effort Will Expand Citywide Reach Out and Read Programs Across Chicago by the Year 2000. In response to the First Lady's challenge, the Harris Foundation committed to spend a minimum of \$100,000 in Chicago to initiate a citywide Reach Out and Read effort by the year 2000. The Harris Foundation has already invested over \$150,000, and today will announce an additional challenge pledge of \$100,000 by the year 2000. Like other Reach Out and Read programs around the country, the Chicago program will combine reading to children in hospitals by volunteers and pediatricians, counseling parents on the importance of and methods for reading to children, and giving children books to take home.

Annual Report Reflects Success of Prescription for Reading Partnership's First Year. The First Lady will receive the Prescription for Reading Partnership's first annual report which highlights the success of the effort and the accomplishments of its first year. Among the Partnership's accomplishments are: an increase from 150,000 to 750,000 children served by Reach Out and Read; an increase from 500 to 4,500 doctors trained to "prescribe reading"; and contributions by Scholastic and First Book together of more than 235,000 books to Reach Out and Read. The national partnership, led by Reach Out and Read, Scholastic, Inc., and First Book, includes the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of Community Health Centers, National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions, American Library Association, Random House, Irving Harris and the Harris Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, American Booksellers Association, Association of American Publishers, Mellon Trust, Dreyfus Corporation, ABC television, Reading is Fundamental, National Association of Chain Drug Stores, and the National Community Pharmacists Association.

Scholastic Expands Commitment to Prescription for Reading Partnership by Creating Multi-Lingual Books. Having met its commitment to provide 200,000 new books to Reach Out and Read and Born to Read, Scholastic will take the next step by creating multi-Lingual Books which will be available in 10 different languages -- with the English translation on every page.

The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning Underscored the Importance of Reading to Infants and Toddlers. The White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning (April 17, 1997) highlighted new research that shows that reading to children in their first few years of life actually helps their brains grow in addition to enhancing their emotional and social development.

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