

As of 3/28/97

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

PANEL ONE PARTICIPANTS

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PANEL 2 PARTICIPANTS UNDER CONSIDERATION

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Executive Director

Ounce of Prevention Fund

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Heads national prominent public-private partnership that develops, runs and evaluates innovative early intervention strategies for replication.

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez

President and CEO

Advance Family Support and Education Program

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Hispanic parenting organization recommended by Carnegie.

Mr. Dwayne Crompton

Executive Director

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Early head start program. Highly recommended.

Mr. Melvin Wearing

Chief of Police

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New Haven, CT

Model for DOJ-funded Yale Child Study Center effort to build collaborations between police precincts and child development/mental health experts. Highly rec. By DOJ.

Mr. Arnold Langbo

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Created and instituted child development programs that are run by (and in) the Hospital such as early learning and reading programs. Also recommended by Carnegie.

Respondents: Co-Chairs of the NGA Task Force on Young Children

The Hon. Bob Miller
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The Hon. George Voinovich
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MORNING PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Dr. David A. Hamburg, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York

Among the many projects completed in his tenure was the production of *Starting Points*, the 1994 seminal report on early childhood development. Dr. Hamburg has served on numerous policy boards, including his current position on the board of the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. In 1996, President Clinton bestowed onto Dr. Hamburg the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Dr. Donald J. Cohen, Director of the Yale University Child Study Center

The Yale Child Study Center is internationally recognized for its multi disciplinary programs of clinical and basic research, professional education, and clinical services and advocacy for children and families. Dr. Cohen is also the Irving Harris Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics and Psychology at the Yale School of Medicine. His research has focused on urban child development and approaches to intervention, as well as studies of the impact of violence and trauma on children and families in the United States and abroad.

Dr. Carla J. Shatz, Professor of Neurobiology at the University of California, Berkeley

Her ongoing studies of brain development have gained her numerous honors, including the Society for Neuroscience Young Investigator Award in 1985 and the Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Health and Education in 1995. Dr. Shatz is the immediate past president of the 24,000 member Society for Neuroscience.

Dr. Patricia K. Kuhl, Chair of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington

Dr. Kuhl's research focuses on language and speech development, and the results of her studies have illustrated how infants' early experience plays a role in the acquisition of language. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Society, and the Acoustical Society of America.

Dr. Ezra C. Davidson, Jr., Professor of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Los Angeles, California

Dr. Davidson also holds professorships at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Dartmouth School of Medicine. He has led an active career in research, education, and clinical and public service, serving, for example, as president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and as chair of the Secretary of Health and Human Services' Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality. He currently chairs the Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs for the Food and Drug Administration.

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics Emeritus at Harvard Medical School

Dr. Brazelton is a widely acclaimed pediatrician, author, and professor, who has served as president of the Society for Research in Child Development and of the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs. Dr. Brazelton is also an active member of the Child Development Unit at Children's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Deborah Phillips, Director of the Board on Children, Youth and Families of the National Research Council's Commission on Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Institute of Medicine

Dr. Phillips is an expert in child care policy. She was the first Director of the Child Care Information Service of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and serves on numerous advisory groups that address child and family policy issues, including the Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers of the U.S. Administration for Children, Youth and Families.

AFTERNOON PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Arnold Langbo, CEO, The Kellogg Company, Battle Creek, Michigan

Last fall, Kellogg launched "Learning Now!" a community-wide partnership between local business and education leaders to provide practical early brain development information to every Battle Creek parent and caregiver. The campaign includes print, radio and TV ads, mailings to parents with information tailored to the age of their children, and brown-bag lunches in hundreds of businesses. The goal is to ensure that every student arrives at school ready to learn.

Gloria Rodriguez, President and CEO, AVANCE, Inc. Family Support and Education Programs, Texas

The AVANCE Program, founded by Dr. Rodriguez in 1973, is a widely acclaimed community and school-based family support program that serves over 7,000 low-income children and parents a year in predominantly Hispanic communities throughout Texas. AVANCE operates in public housing centers, elementary schools, and through its family service centers. It presents classes on child development and parenting activities, conducts home visits by trained staff, reaches out to fathers, and disseminates information on community services and education classes and job training.

Sheila Amaning, Co-President, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Early Childhood PTA, North Carolina

This Early Childhood PTA gives parents of pre-school age children the opportunity to share ideas with each other and become involved in their children's learning from the start. Ms. Amaning has participated in this Early Childhood PTA since her son was two years old.

Melvin Wearing, Chief of Police, New Haven, Connecticut

With support from the Department of Justice, the New Haven Police Department has partnered with mental health clinicians at the Yale Child Study Center to develop innovative ways in which community police officers can deliver better serve children and families exposed to violence.

Harriet Meyer, Executive Director, Ounce of Prevention, Chicago, Illinois

The Ounce of Prevention Fund combines public resources with private funds to develop and test innovative early intervention strategies for replication. The Ounce's Center for Successful Child Development provides child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, home visits, medical care, and other services to families in public housing. The Ounce's Beethoven Project was one of the models for the federal Early Head Start program established in 1994.

Rob Reiner, Founder, "I Am Your Child" Campaign

The "I Am Your Child" campaign launched this week brings together entertainment leaders, corporations, foundations, elected officials, and early childhood experts to work together to promote family and community involvement in the early stages of young children's lives.

Gov. Bob Miller, Governor of Nevada, Chair of the National Governors' Association and Co-Chair of the National Governors' Association's Children's Task Force

The National Governors' Association has formed the Children's Task Force to explore what actions states can take to enhance early childhood development.

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 hosted *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 highlighted new scientific findings on brain development in very young children and pointed to the importance of children's earliest experiences in helping them get off to a strong and healthy start and reach their full potential.

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 focused on the practical applications of the latest scientific research on the brain, particularly for parents and caregivers. The conference was also 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 discussed the new research and what it means for parents and caregivers. The panelists for this session were: 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 highlighted model community efforts to support parents and enhance early childhood development. The panelists included: 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 was broadcast by satellite to over 800 locations across the country. The satellite conferences were co-hosted by regional federal agencies, local officials, and children's and other organizations.

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

Recent scientific research has demonstrated that experiences during the earliest years of life -- before children reach school age -- are critical to their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. Nurturing and stimulating children in the first years of life actually help their brains develop and prepare them for the challenges of school and later life. President Clinton is committed to giving America's children the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential by investing in research, supporting parents and caregivers, and strengthening programs that provide early intervention to disadvantaged families.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

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 -- over 90% of all funding of children's research. Spending on children's health research at The National Institutes of Health (NIH) increased 25% between 1993 and 1997, and this year NIH will spend \$904 million on research on young children alone. This research has contributed to the recent advances in understanding early learning and language development.

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, 75% of two-year olds were fully immunized -- an historic high. Funding for childhood immunization has doubled since fiscal year 1993.

Protected the Medicaid Guarantee for 9 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.

Fighting Pediatric AIDS. In 1994, the National Institutes of Health released new research showing that the use of the drug AZT by HIV-infected pregnant women can reduce the risk of transmission from mother to child by two-thirds. In response, the Food and Drug Administration quickly approved changes in labeling indications for AZT to include HIV-infected pregnant women and, in 1995, the Centers for Disease Control began recommending routing HIV counseling and voluntary HIV testing for all pregnant women. In addition, the President has consistently supported investment through Title IV of the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides grants for coordinated HIV services and access to research for children, women and families. Since 1994, \$113 million has been appropriated under Title IV, with 59 organizations in 26 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia receiving support.

Protecting Mothers and Children. Due to the Clinton Administration's comprehensive strategy to increase access to prenatal care, the preliminary estimate for the U.S. infant mortality rate (the rate at which babies die before their first birthday) is at an historic low of less than 8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1995, and the proportion of mothers getting early prenatal care is at a record high of 81%. In addition, the President spearheaded legislation requiring insurance companies to cover at least 48 hour hospital stays following childbirth. In 1970, the average length of stay for an uncomplicated delivery was four days, but by 1992 it had declined to two days. This legislation ensures that mothers and babies do not leave the hospital before they and their doctors decide they are ready. The Administration is ensuring that the health needs of mothers and

children are met by providing over \$1 billion in FY 97 for Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs. The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, one of the Title V programs, serves approximately 17 million women, infants and children, in partnership with states. In addition, Title V programs provide comprehensive care for children with special health needs, meet nutritional and development needs of mothers and children and help reduce infant mortality.

Preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The Clinton Administration launched the Back to Sleep public education campaign to send the message to parents and health professionals that putting babies to sleep on their backs can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Largely as a result of this campaign, SIDS deaths dropped by 30% between 1992 and 1995.

PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING

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. President Clinton has made improving and expanding Head Start a priority because Head Start ensures that low-income children start school ready to learn. Over the past five years, funding for the program has increased by 80%, and in fiscal year 1997 Head Start will serve 800,000 low-income children five years old and younger. Initiated in 1994, there are now 143 *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 and providing local programs with the resources they need to attract and retain high quality teachers. 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.

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%. 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.

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 (HIPPY) 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.

IMPROVING CHILD CARE

Increased Child Care Funding. Since 1993 federal funding for child care has increased by \$1 billion, providing services for over 660,000 children -- 65% of whom are under 5 years of age. The newly established Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) has made available \$2.9 billion to states. The new fund, authorized and expanded by the new welfare law, will assist low-income families working their way off welfare to obtain child care so they can work or attend school.

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 High Quality Child Care for Military Families. Under the Clinton Administration, the Department of Defense has made important strides to improve the quality of child care for the children of the men and women who serve our country. Since 1992, the number of military child care facilities that are accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children has risen from 55 to 466. Currently, 72% of military child care programs are accredited, as compared to only 7% of other child care facilities nationwide.

SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Controlling Childhood Lead Poisoning. The Administration has launched a major new effort to control childhood lead poisoning. The program requires landlords and sellers of older homes to notify prospective tenants and buyers about lead-based paint hazards, provides grants to states to control lead-based paint hazards in low-income privately-owned homes, and offers technical assistance to ensure that lead hazard control work is done safely and efficiently. The 1997 interim report evaluating the HUD Lead-Based Point Hazard Control grant program shows that median dust levels on interior window sills were reduced by 85 %. In addition, the number of children suffering from lead poisoning dropped from 1.7 million in the late 1980s to about 930,000 in the mid-1990s.

Protecting Our Children's Environment. Because their bodies are still developing, children are among the most vulnerable to pollution in the air, water and soil. In 1995, the Clinton Administration began requiring that children receive first consideration when EPA assesses

environmental hazards and sets public health standards. In addition, the Clinton Administration has strengthened environmental protections for children by: proposing to strengthen air quality standards for soot and smog to protect children from air pollution, particularly those with asthma; speeding the clean-up of two-thirds of the nation's toxic waste sites to protect the 10 million children under age 12 who live within four miles of a toxic waste dump; strengthening drinking water protections to ensure that drinking water is free of microbial contaminants; expanding families' right to know about environmental health risks that infants and children face to help them make informed decisions about their children's exposure to these risks; issuing advisories about contaminated fish so parents can protect children from cancer-causing PCBs; and educating parents about the effects of second-hand smoke, which annually results in 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations of infants and children under 18 months of age.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Passed Family and Medical Leave. The President fought for the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) that allows workers to take up to 12 weeks unpaid leave to care for a newborn or adopted child, to attend to their own serious health needs, or to care for a seriously ill parent, child or spouse. In June 1996, President Clinton proposed expanding FMLA to allow workers to take up to 24 unpaid hours off each year for school and early childhood education activities, routine family medical care, and additional activities related to caring for an elderly relative. Last week, the President asked Federal agencies to implement his expanded leave policy immediately for Federal workers.

Improved Children's Television. The President announced a breakthrough agreement with the media and entertainment industry to develop a television ratings system to enable parents to protect their children from violence and adult content. In addition, the Administration has given parents greater control over what their children watch on television by requiring the installation of anti-violence screening chips ("V-chips") in all new televisions.

Reducing Child Abuse and Domestic Violence. The Administration created the Safe Streets/Safe Kids initiative to make community responses to child abuse and neglect more comprehensive and coordinated in an effort to break the cycle of early childhood victimization and later delinquency. The Administration also put in place a nurse home visitation program for low-income first-time mothers. Studies have shown that home visitation programs are successful -- for example, reducing cigarette smoking during pregnancy by 25% and reducing mistreatment of children from birth to age 2 by 80 percent. The Clinton Administration has also taken significant steps to reduce domestic violence. For example, the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program helps law enforcement agencies, courts community organizations and businesses to work toward early identification, intervention and prevention of domestic violence and child victimization in rural areas. Finally, the President is committed to finding stable and permanent homes for children who cannot remain safely at home. As a result, the Administration announced Adoption 2002, a plan to double the number of children adopted or placed in permanent homes each year by the year 2002.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today, the President and First Lady are hosting *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 highlights new scientific findings on brain development in very young children and points to the importance of children's earliest experiences in helping them get off to a strong and healthy start and reach their full potential.

Clinton Administration Commitment to Young Children. The Clinton 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. President Clinton has also strengthened efforts to support families with young children by investing in Head Start and Early Head Start, the WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program, immunization and other early childhood programs.

At the conference, the President will make a series of policy announcements that build on the Clinton Administration's commitment to young children:

Improving the Quality of Child Care By Learning from the Military. Child care experts believe that the military child care system is now the best in the country. The President is issuing an executive memorandum directing the Secretary of Defense to use the Department's expertise to help improve child care across the nation. The memorandum urges the Department to consider: (1) creating partnerships with civilian child care centers in the community to help them improve quality; (2) providing training courses for civilian child care providers; (3) sharing the materials and models for worker training, accreditation and evaluation, facility design, financing, and other ingredients of the military's success; and (4) working with States and local governments to enable military child care facilities to serve as training sites for welfare recipients moving from welfare to work.

Providing Health Coverage for Children. The President's fiscal year 1998 budget includes a children's health initiative that will extend coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children by the year 2000 by strengthening Medicaid for poor children, building innovative State programs to provide coverage for working families, and continuing health coverage for children of workers who are between jobs. Today, the Association of American Medical Colleges issued a letter of support for the Clinton Administration's children's health proposal.

Importance of Early Education. The President recognizes that children must be nurtured and stimulated in the earliest years. That is why he is announcing two initiatives geared toward early learning.

- **Expanding Early Head Start.** The Department of Health and Human Services is requesting proposals for new Early Head Start programs to expand Early Head Start enrollment by one-third next year. Created by the Clinton Administration in 1994, the Early Head Start program brings Head Start's successful comprehensive services to

families with children ages zero to three and to pregnant women.

- **Giving Parents and Caregivers Early Childhood Tools.** The President's America Reads Challenge is releasing "Ready*Set*Read" early childhood development activity kits. The kits offer suggestions to families and caregivers about developmentally appropriate activities for children ages zero to five. They will be distributed to early childhood programs across the country and to callers to the Department of Education's 1-800-USA-LEARN hotline.

Safe Start. The Department of Justice is establishing "Safe Start" to change the way law enforcement officers respond to children who are the victims of or witnesses to violence. The program will provide training on early childhood development to community police officers, prosecutors, probation and parole officers, school personnel and mental health providers. It will better prepare law enforcement officials to respond to young children exposed to violence and can help prevent today's children from turning into tomorrow's criminals. The initiative is built on the successful partnerships between community police officers and mental health providers funded by DOJ in New Haven, Connecticut and three other communities.

PRESIDENT CLINTON ASKS THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO SHARE EXPERTISE FROM THE MILITARY CHILD CARE SYSTEM

We now know that children's earliest experiences, including those in child care, have significant effects on learning and development. I believe we all have a role to play in making sure that all of our children have a strong and healthy start in life.

-President Bill Clinton, 4/17/97

Today, the President urged the Secretary of the Department of Defense to use the military's expertise to improve child care across the nation.

Building on Success: Learning from the Military.

Child care experts believe that the military child care system is now the best in the country. Military child care programs serve the families of men and women in the United States armed forces and the civilian employees of the Department of Defense. In developing its child care system, the Department of Defense has learned how to make a difference in the day to day lives of children. The military child care system is noted for: (1) high quality standards, including a high percentage of accredited centers; (2) a strong enforcement and oversight system with four annual unannounced inspections and a 1-800 hot line for parents to report concerns; (3) mandatory training for child care providers; (4) relatively generous wages and benefits tied to continued training and education; (5) a system of linking up and providing needed support to individual home care providers; and (6) sufficient funding to make quality child care affordable.

Leading the Nation in Child Care Accreditation.

Most notably, the Defense Department today leads the nation in achieving child care accreditation: 72% of all of its child care programs have been accredited, compared to 5% nationally. Most of the Department's success in meeting accreditation standards has come recently: the National Association for the Education of Young Children has accredited 337 of military child care facilities today, as compared to 55 in 1992.

A Challenge to the Defense Department.

The President issued an executive memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, directing him to use the Department's expertise to improve child care in communities across the nation. The memorandum urges the Department to consider: (1) creating partnerships with civilian child care centers in the community to help them improve quality; (2) providing training courses for civilian child care providers; (3) sharing the materials and models used by the military for worker training, accreditation and evaluation, facility design, financing and other ingredients of their success; and (4) working with States and local governments to enable military child care facilities to serve as training locations for welfare recipients moving from welfare to work.

discretion

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

Significant gaps remain in children's health coverage. In 1995, 10 million children in America lacked health insurance. The President's children's health initiative will extend coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children by 2000 by strengthening Medicaid for poor children, building innovative State programs for working families, and continuing health coverage for children of workers who are between jobs. Today, the Association of American Medical Colleges issued a letter of support for the Clinton Administration's children's health initiative.

Strengthening Medicaid for Poor Children

- **12-Month Continuous Eligibility.** Currently, many children receive Medicaid protection for only part of the year. The President's fiscal year 1998 budget gives States the option to provide one year of continuous Medicaid coverage to children. The budget invests \$3.7 billion over five years, covering an estimated million children who would otherwise be uninsured.
- **Outreach.** The President also proposes to work with the Nation's Governors, communities, advocacy groups, providers, and businesses to develop new ways to reach out to the 3 million children eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid.

Building Innovative State Programs for Children in Working Families

- The President's budget provides \$3.8 billion between 1998 to 2002 (\$750 million a year) in grants to States. States will use these grants to provide insurance for children, leveraging State and private investments in children's coverage through a matching system (as in Medicaid). States have flexibility in designing eligibility rules, benefits (subject to minimums set by the Secretary), and delivery systems.
- The Federal grants, in combination with State and private money, will cover an estimated one million children whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford private coverage. The grant program will also increase Medicaid enrollment by about 400,000 kids since some families interested in the new program will learn that their children are in fact eligible for Medicaid.

Continuing Coverage for Children Whose Parents are Between Jobs

- The President's budget will give States grants to temporarily cover workers between jobs, including their children, at a cost of \$9.8 billion over the budget window. The program, which is structured as a four-year demonstration, will offer temporary assistance (up to 6 months) to families who would otherwise lose their coverage. This assistance may be used to purchase coverage from the worker's former employer (through COBRA) or other private plans, at States' discretion.
- This initiative will help an estimated 3.3 million working Americans and their families, including 700,000 children, in any given year.
- The President's budget also makes it easier for small businesses to establish voluntary purchasing cooperatives, increasing access to insurance for workers and their children.

April 17, 1997

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

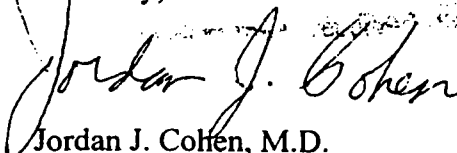
On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to express our strong support for your efforts to extend health care coverage to the ten million American children who are currently without coverage.

Recent studies have shown that the reduction in the availability of health insurance has disproportionately affected children in part due to the decline in employment-based dependent coverage coupled with the general reduction of employment-based coverage. As you know, lack of health insurance coverage has been shown to be a deterrent for individuals both in requesting and receiving care. As a result, many uninsured persons seek treatment for themselves and their family when their condition is more advanced and, as a result, more difficult and expensive to treat. For a child, forgoing needed medical care can have implications that last a lifetime.

The AAMC represents all of the nation's 125 accredited medical schools, approximately 400 major teaching hospitals, including 75 Veterans Affairs medical centers, the faculty of these institutions through 89 constituent academic society members and the more than 160,000 men and women in medical education as students and residents. The AAMC member institutions, which have the multiple missions of education and training, research and direct patient care, are acutely aware of the rise in the number of uninsured Americans, many of whom seek treatment at our institutions.

As you strive to reach an agreement on a balanced budget, the AAMC strongly supports your efforts as well as those on Capitol Hill to include a significant investment to expand health insurance coverage for children. We are prepared to work with you, your staff and members of Congress to achieve this critical objective for our nation's children.

Sincerely,



Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.
President

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S SAFE START INITIATIVE

Announcement

- Today at the White House Early Childhood Development and Learning Conference, the President announced a new Safe Start Initiative to help break the cycle of violence for our nation's youngest victims. The Safe Start Initiative will provide training to law enforcement, prosecutors, school personnel, probation officers, and other professionals to better respond to the needs of children exposed to violence in their homes and communities.

The Problem

- Throughout America, too many children are exposed to violence at home, in their neighborhoods, and in their schools. Children's exposure to violence has been associated with increased depression, anger, substance abuse, and lower academic achievement. Children who experience violence either as victims or witnesses also are at increased risk of becoming violent themselves.
- In a study conducted at Boston City Hospital, 1 out of every 10 children seen in its primary care clinic had witnessed a shooting or stabbing before the age of 6 -- half in their homes and half in the streets. The average age of these children was only 2.7 years old.

The Safe Start Initiative

- The Safe Start Initiative builds on the Child Development-Community Policing Program (CD-CP) started in 1991 between the New Haven Department of Police Services and Yale University Child Study Center, and now funded by the Department of Justice. It was more recently extended to Buffalo, NY; Charlotte, NC; Nashville, TN; and Portland, OR, with Justice Department funding.
- The Safe Start Initiative will increase the number and expand the scope of these regional demonstration sites in which community police officers partner with mental health clinicians to provide rapid and effective treatment to children exposed to violence.
- The Safe Start Initiative will also provide nationwide intensive training and technical assistance for professionals who come into contact with children who have been exposed to family and gang violence, violence in their community and schools, and abuse or neglect.
- Up to 20,000 professionals who work with children in communities across the nation will receive Safe Start training including: law enforcement, prosecutors, school personnel, and probation and parole officers.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING
April 17, 1997

THE PRESIDENT & MRS. CLINTON
THE VICE PRESIDENT & MRS. GORE

Dr. John Lawrence Aber
Director, National Center for Children in Poverty

Dr. Duane F. Alexander
Director, National Institute of Child Health & Human Development

Ms. Sheila Pegues Amaning
Co-Chair, Early Childhood PTA

Ms. Carolyn Becraft
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families
and Education

Ms. Helen Benham
Scholastic, Inc.

Mrs. Carol Berman
Zero to Three National Center

Ms. Julie Bernas-Pierce
Blind Babies Foundation

Hon. Sheldon C. Bilchik
Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
Department of Justice

Ms. Barbara "Bobbi" Blok
Executive Director, Washington Child Development Council

Dr. Thomas Berry Brazelton
Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

Mr. David V.B. Britt
President & CEO, Children's Television Workshop

Mr. James Larry Brown
Director, Center on Hunger, Poverty & Nutrition Policy, Tufts University

Dr. John Bruer
President, James S. McConnell Foundation

Mr. Shannon Romandos Bryant
Student Team Leader, Jumpstart

Mr. Patrick Butler
Vice President, The Washington Post Company

Hon. Jane L. Campbell
Cuyahoga County Commissioner

Rev. (Dr.) Joan Brown Campbell
General Secretary, National Council of Churches

Ms. Joy Carlson
Director, Children's Environmental Health Network

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Governor of Florida

Dr. Harry T. Chugani
Director, PET Center, Children's Hospital of Michigan

Dr. Donald Cohen
Director, Yale University Child Study Center

Dr. Jordan J. Cohen
President, Academy of American Medical Colleges

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

2.

Ms. Janice Cox
President, Georgia State Parent Teacher Association

Mr. Dwayne Crompton
Executive Director, KCMC-Early Child Development Corporation

Ms. Judsen Culbreth
Editor-in-Chief, Working Mother

Ms. Sharon Darling
President, National Center for Family Literacy

Dr. Ezra C. Davidson
Professor & Chairman, Dept. of OBGYN, Charles R. Drew University
of Medicine & Science

Dr. Karen Davis
President, The Commonwealth Fund

Hon. (Rep.) Rosa DeLauro
D/Connecticut

Ms. Barbara Dellinger
Director for Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Head Start

Ms. Deborah Eaton
President, National Association for Family Child Care

Ms. Marian Wright Edelman
President, Children's Defense Fund

Ms. Isela Flores

Ms. Yolie Flores Aguilar
Los Angeles, CA

Dr. Henry W. Foster
Acting President, Meharry Medical College

Ms. Ellen Galinsky
Co-President, Family & Work Institute

Hon. (Dr.) John H. Gibbons
Director, Office of Science & Technology Policy

Ms. Ellen Gilbert
International Creative Management

Hon. Daniel Glickman
Secretary of Agriculture

Mrs. Katharine Graham
Chairman of the Board, The Washington Post Company

Ms. Sarah Greene
Chief Executive Officer, National Head Start Association, Partnership Project

Dr. Stanley Greenspan
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics, George Washington Medical School

Ms. Elinor Guggenheimer
Child Care Action Campaign

Dr. Megan Gunnar
University of Minnesota

Ms. Margaret Hale
Executive Director, West Virginia Kids Count

Ms. Martha D. Haley
Director, Public Affairs, Lifetime Television

Dr. David Alan Hamburg
President, Carnegie Corporation of New York

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3.

Dr. Robert E. Hannemann
President, American Academy of Pediatrics

Hon. (Sen.) Thomas R. Harkin
D/Iowa

Mr. Irving Harris
Chairman, The Harris Foundation

Mr. William Harris
KidsPAC, Head Start

Dr. Jane M. Healy
Author

Ms. Judith Nolte Heimer
Editor-in-Chief, American Baby Magazine

Mrs. Teresa Heinz
Chairman, Heinz Family Foundation

Ms. Harriet Meyer Horwitz
Executive Director, Ounce of Prevention Fund

Mr. Jeffrey Jacobs
President, Harpo Entertainment, Inc.

Ms. Eloise Jenks
President, National Association of WIC Directors

Ms. Judith Marie Jerald
Brattleboro, VT

Dr. Gloria Johnson-Powell
Judge Baker Children's Center

Ms. Judith E. Jones
Director, Free to Grow

Hon. Elena Kagan
Office of Domestic Policy, The White House

Dr. Elaine C. Kamarck
Office of the Vice President

Hon. (Sen.) Edward M. Kennedy
D/Massachusetts

Dr. Patricia Kuhl
Professor & Chair, Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences
University of Washington

Dr. J. Ronald Lally
Director, Center for Child & Family Studies, WestED

Dr. Philip J. Landrigan
Director, Office of Children's Environment Health, EPA

Mr. Arnold Langbo
Chairman of the Board & CEO, Kellogg Corporation

Mr. Ralph S. Larsen
Chairman and CEO, Johnson & Johnson

Dr. David M. Lawrence
CEO, Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program

Ms. Geraldine B. Laybourne
President, Disney/ABC Cable Networks

Ms. Dolores Leckey
Executive Director for the Secretariat, Catholic Conference

Dr. Arthur Leibowitz
Chief Medical Officer, AETNA US Healthcare

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4.

Dr. Michael Levine
Program Officer, Carnegie Corporation of New York

Mr. David Liederman
Executive Director, Child Welfare League of America

Dr. Carolynn Lindeman
National President, Music Educators National Conference

Dr. Evelyn Gruss Lipper
Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Cornell Medical Center

Ms. Melissa Ludtke
Author

Dr. Shirley M. Malcom
Director of Education, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Rear Admiral Larry R. Marsh
Bureau of Naval Personnel

Mr. Lawrence A. McAndrews
President & CEO, National Association of Children's Hospitals

Dr. Bruce McEwen
President, Society for Neuroscience, Rockefeller University

Ms. Gail McGovern
AT&T

Mr. Matthew Melmed
Executive Director, Zero to Three National Center for Infants

Hon. (Gov.) Robert J. Miller
Governor of Nevada

Dr. Evelyn K. Moore
Executive Director, National Black Child Development Institute

Dr. Herbert L. Needleman
University of Pittsburgh Medical School

Dr. David Olds
University of Colorado

Dr. Bruce Perry
Senior Fellow, CIVITAS Initiatives

Dr. Carol Brunson Phillips
Executive Director, Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition

Dr. Deborah Phillips
Director, Board on Children, Youth & Families, National Academy of Sciences

Dr. Bruce Ramirez
The Council for Exceptional Children

Mrs. Michele Singer Reiner
Castlerock Entertainment

Mr. Robert Reiner
Castlerock Entertainment

Ms. Barbara Reisman
Executive Director, Child Care Action Campaign

Mr. James J. Renier
Renier & Associates

Ms. Nan H. Rich
National President, National Council of Jewish Women

Dr. Julius Richmond
Professor of Health Policy, Emeritus, Harvard University Medical School

Mr. John E. Riggan
Chairman of the Board, National Association of Child Advocates

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5.

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Secretary of Education

Ms. Geraldine Robinson
The Children's Museum

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez
President and CEO, Avance Family Support & Education Program

Ms. Susan Roman
Executive Director, American Libraries Association Services to Children

Hon. (Gov.) Roy R. Romer
Governor of Colorado

Mr. Edward F. Rover
Charles A. Dana Foundation

Ms. Esperanza Segura

Mr. Rudy Segura

Honorable Donna E. Shalala
Secretary of Health & Human Services

Dr. Carla J. Shatz
Professor of Neurobiology, Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Mr. Jack Shifrel
Community Advocate

Ms. Marilyn Smith
Executive Director, National Association for the Education of Young Children

Mr. Marshall Smith
Acting Deputy Secretary of Education

Mr. Richard M. Smith
Editor-in-Chief & President, Newsweek, Inc.

Dr. Mary Susan Stine
Section Chief of Developmental Medicine, DuPont Hospital for Children

Ms. Maria Gregory Taylor
Parent Education Specialist, Parents as Teachers Program

Ms. Inez Moore Tenenbaum
President, South Carolina Center for Family Policy

Ms. Ruth Tracy
Navajo Chapter Coordinator, Pilot Parents

Mr. Thomas Van Coverden
President and CEO, National Association of Community Health Centers

Dr. Harold Varmus
Director, National Institutes of Health

Hon. Melanne Verveer
Assistant to the President & Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Ms. Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Mr. David Walker
Executive Director, North Carolina Partnership for Children

Ms. Claudia Wayne
Executive Director, National Center for the Early Childhood Workforce

Mr. Melvin Wearing
Chief of Police, City of New Haven

Dr. Betsy Weaver

President & CEO, Parent's Plus, Inc.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

6.

Ms. Bernice S. Weissbourd

President, Family Focus

Dr. Miriam Westheimer

Executive Director, HIPPY USA

Dr. Clarissa Leister Willis

Executive Director, Southern Early Childhood Association

Ms. Mildred Winter

Executive Director, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

Ms. Marti Worshtil

College Park, MD

Dr. Ernst L. Wynder

President, American Health Foundation

Dr. Edward Zigler

Professor of Psychology, Yale University

Dr. Barry Zuckerman

Professor & Chairman of Pediatrics, Boston Medical Center

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

Today, the President and First Lady are hosting *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 highlights 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 80 locations across the country. The satellite conferences will be co-hosted by regional federal agencies, local officials, and children's and other organizations.

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

Recent scientific research has demonstrated that experiences during the earliest years of life -- before children reach school age -- are critical to their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. Nurturing and stimulating children in the first years of life actually help their brains develop and prepare them for the challenges of school and later life. President Clinton is committed to giving America's children the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential by investing in research, supporting parents and caregivers, and strengthening programs that provide early intervention to disadvantaged families.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

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 -- over 90% of all funding of children's research. Spending on children's health research at The National Institutes of Health (NIH) increased 25% between 1993 and 1997, and this year NIH will spend \$904 million on research on young children alone. This research has contributed to the recent advances in understanding early learning and language development.

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, 75% of two-year olds were fully immunized -- an historic high. Funding for childhood immunization has doubled since fiscal year 1993.

Protected the Medicaid Guarantee for 9 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.

Fighting Pediatric AIDS. In 1994, the National Institutes of Health released new research showing that the use of the drug AZT by HIV-infected pregnant women can reduce the risk of transmission from mother to child by two-thirds. In response, the Food and Drug Administration quickly approved changes in labeling indications for AZT to include HIV-infected pregnant women and, in 1995, the Centers for Disease Control began recommending routine HIV counseling and voluntary HIV testing for all pregnant women. In addition, the President has consistently supported investment through Title IV of the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides grants for coordinated HIV services and access to research for children, women and families. Since 1994, \$113 million has been appropriated under Title IV, with 59 organizations in 26 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia receiving support.

Protecting Mothers and Children. Due to the Clinton Administration's comprehensive strategy to increase access to prenatal care, the preliminary estimate for the U.S. infant mortality rate (the rate at which babies die before their first birthday) is at an historic low of less than 8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1995, and the proportion of mothers getting early prenatal care is at a record high of 81%. In addition, the President spearheaded legislation requiring insurance companies to cover at least 48 hour hospital stays following childbirth. In 1970, the average length of stay for an uncomplicated delivery was four days, but by 1992 it had declined to two days. This legislation ensures that mothers and babies do not leave the hospital before they and their doctors decide they are ready. The Administration is ensuring that the health needs of mothers and

children are met by providing over \$1 billion in FY 97 for Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs. The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, one of the Title V programs, serves approximately 17 million women, infants and children, in partnership with states. In addition, Title V programs provide comprehensive care for children with special health needs, meet nutritional and development needs of mothers and children and help reduce infant mortality.

Preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The Clinton Administration launched the Back to Sleep public education campaign to send the message to parents and health professionals that putting babies to sleep on their backs can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Largely as a result of this campaign, SIDS deaths dropped by 30% between 1992 and 1995.

PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING

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. President Clinton has made improving and expanding Head Start a priority because Head Start ensures that low-income children start school ready to learn. Over the past five years, funding for the program has increased by 80%, and in fiscal year 1997 Head Start will serve 800,000 low-income children five years old and younger. Initiated in 1994, there are now 143 *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 and providing local programs with the resources they need to attract and retain high quality teachers. 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.

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%. 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.

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 (HIPPY) 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.

IMPROVING CHILD CARE

Increased Child Care Funding. Since 1993 federal funding for child care has increased by \$1 billion, providing services for over 660,000 children -- 65% of whom are under 5 years of age. The newly established Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) has made available \$2.9 billion to states. The new fund, authorized and expanded by the new welfare law, will assist low-income families working their way off welfare to obtain child care so they can work or attend school.

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 High Quality Child Care for Military Families. Under the Clinton Administration, the Department of Defense has made important strides to improve the quality of child care for the children of the men and women who serve our country. Since 1992, the number of military child care facilities that are accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children has risen from 55 to 466. Currently, 72% of military child care programs are accredited, as compared to only 7% of other child care facilities nationwide.

SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Controlling Childhood Lead Poisoning. The Administration has launched a major new effort to control childhood lead poisoning. The program requires landlords and sellers of older homes to notify prospective tenants and buyers about lead-based paint hazards, provides grants to states to control lead-based paint hazards in low-income privately-owned homes, and offers technical assistance to ensure that lead hazard control work is done safely and efficiently. The 1997 interim report evaluating the HUD Lead-Based Point Hazard Control grant program shows that median dust levels on interior window sills were reduced by 85 %. In addition, the number of children suffering from lead poisoning dropped from 1.7 million in the late 1980s to about 930,000 in the mid-1990s.

Protecting Our Children's Environment. Because their bodies are still developing, children are among the most vulnerable to pollution in the air, water and soil. In 1995, the Clinton Administration began requiring that children receive first consideration when EPA assesses

environmental hazards and sets public health standards. In addition, the Clinton Administration has strengthened environmental protections for children by: proposing to strengthen air quality standards for soot and smog to protect children from air pollution, particularly those with asthma; speeding the clean-up of two-thirds of the nation's toxic waste sites to protect the 10 million children under age 12 who live within four miles of a toxic waste dump; strengthening drinking water protections to ensure that drinking water is free of microbial contaminants; expanding families' right to know about environmental health risks that infants and children face to help them make informed decisions about their children's exposure to these risks; issuing advisories about contaminated fish so parents can protect children from cancer-causing PCBs; and educating parents about the effects of second-hand smoke, which annually results in 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations of infants and children under 18 months of age.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Passed Family and Medical Leave. The President fought for the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) that allows workers to take up to 12 weeks unpaid leave to care for a newborn or adopted child, to attend to their own serious health needs, or to care for a seriously ill parent, child or spouse. In June 1996, President Clinton proposed expanding FMLA to allow workers to take up to 24 unpaid hours off each year for school and early childhood education activities, routine family medical care, and additional activities related to caring for an elderly relative. Last week, the President asked Federal agencies to implement his expanded leave policy immediately for Federal workers.

Improved Children's Television. The President announced a breakthrough agreement with the media and entertainment industry to develop a television ratings system to enable parents to protect their children from violence and adult content. In addition, the Administration has given parents greater control over what their children watch on television by requiring the installation of anti-violence screening chips ("V-chips") in all new televisions.

Reducing Child Abuse and Domestic Violence. The Administration created the Safe Streets/Safe Kids initiative to make community responses to child abuse and neglect more comprehensive and coordinated in an effort to break the cycle of early childhood victimization and later delinquency. The Administration also put in place a nurse home visitation program for low-income first-time mothers. Studies have shown that home visitation programs are successful -- for example, reducing cigarette smoking during pregnancy by 25% and reducing mistreatment of children from birth to age 2 by 80 percent. The Clinton Administration has also taken significant steps to reduce domestic violence. For example, the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program helps law enforcement agencies, courts community organizations and businesses to work toward early identification, intervention and prevention of domestic violence and child victimization in rural areas. Finally, the President is committed to finding stable and permanent homes for children who cannot remain safely at home. As a result, the Administration announced Adoption 2002, a plan to double the number of children adopted or placed in permanent homes each year by the year 2002.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today, the President and First Lady are hosting *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 highlights new scientific findings on brain development in very young children and points to the importance of children's earliest experiences in helping them get off to a strong and healthy start and reach their full potential.

Clinton Administration Commitment to Young Children. The Clinton 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. President Clinton has also strengthened efforts to support families with young children by investing in Head Start and Early Head Start, the WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program, immunization and other early childhood programs.

At the conference, the President will make a series of policy announcements that build on the Clinton Administration's commitment to young children:

Improving the Quality of Child Care By Learning from the Military. Child care experts believe that the military child care system is now the best in the country. The President is issuing an executive memorandum directing the Secretary of Defense to use the Department's expertise to help improve child care across the nation. The memorandum urges the Department to consider: (1) creating partnerships with civilian child care centers in the community to help them improve quality; (2) providing training courses for civilian child care providers; (3) sharing the materials and models for worker training, accreditation and evaluation, facility design, financing, and other ingredients of the military's success; and (4) working with States and local governments to enable military child care facilities to serve as training sites for welfare recipients moving from welfare to work.

Providing Health Coverage for Children. The President's fiscal year 1998 budget includes a children's health initiative that will extend coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children by the year 2000 by strengthening Medicaid for poor children, building innovative State programs to provide coverage for working families, and continuing health coverage for children of workers who are between jobs. Today, the Association of American Medical Colleges issued a letter of support for the Clinton Administration's children's health proposal.

Importance of Early Education. The President recognizes that children must be nurtured and stimulated in the earliest years. That is why he is announcing two initiatives geared toward early learning.

- **Expanding Early Head Start.** The Department of Health and Human Services is requesting proposals for new Early Head Start programs to expand Early Head Start enrollment by one-third next year. Created by the Clinton Administration in 1994, the Early Head Start program brings Head Start's successful comprehensive services to

families with children ages zero to three and to pregnant women.

- **Giving Parents and Caregivers Early Childhood Tools.** The President's America Reads Challenge is releasing "Ready*Set*Read" early childhood development activity kits. The kits offer suggestions to families and caregivers about developmentally appropriate activities for children ages zero to five. They will be distributed to early childhood programs across the country and to callers to the Department of Education's 1-800-USA-LEARN hotline.

Safe Start. The Department of Justice is establishing "Safe Start" to change the way law enforcement officers respond to children who are the victims of or witnesses to violence. The program will provide training on early childhood development to community police officers, prosecutors, probation and parole officers, school personnel and mental health providers. It will better prepare law enforcement officials to respond to young children exposed to violence and can help prevent today's children from turning into tomorrow's criminals. The initiative is built on the successful partnerships between community police officers and mental health providers funded by DOJ in New Haven, Connecticut and three other communities.

PRESIDENT CLINTON ASKS THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO SHARE EXPERTISE FROM THE MILITARY CHILD CARE SYSTEM

We now know that children's earliest experiences, including those in child care, have significant effects on learning and development. I believe we all have a role to play in making sure that all of our children have a strong and healthy start in life.

-President Bill Clinton, 4/17/97

Today, the President urged the Secretary of the Department of Defense to use the military's expertise to improve child care across the nation.

Building on Success: Learning from the Military.

Child care experts believe that the military child care system is now the best in the country. Military child care programs serve the families of men and women in the United States armed forces and the civilian employees of the Department of Defense. In developing its child care system, the Department of Defense has learned how to make a difference in the day to day lives of children. The military child care system is noted for: (1) high quality standards, including a high percentage of accredited centers; (2) a strong enforcement and oversight system with four annual unannounced inspections and a 1-800 hot line for parents to report concerns; (3) mandatory training for child care providers; (4) relatively generous wages and benefits tied to continued training and education; (5) a system of linking up and providing needed support to individual home care providers; and (6) sufficient funding to make quality child care affordable.

Leading the Nation in Child Care Accreditation.

Most notably, the Defense Department today leads the nation in achieving child care accreditation: 72% of all of its child care programs have been accredited, compared to 5% nationally. Most of the Department's success in meeting accreditation standards has come recently: the National Association for the Education of Young Children has accredited 337 of military child care facilities today, as compared to 55 in 1992.

A Challenge to the Defense Department.

The President issued an executive memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, directing him to use the Department's expertise to improve child care in communities across the nation. The memorandum urges the Department to consider: (1) creating partnerships with civilian child care centers in the community to help them improve quality; (2) providing training courses for civilian child care providers; (3) sharing the materials and models used by the military for worker training, accreditation and evaluation, facility design, financing and other ingredients of their success; and (4) working with States and local governments to enable military child care facilities to serve as training locations for welfare recipients moving from welfare to work.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

Significant gaps remain in children's health coverage. In 1995, 10 million children in America lacked health insurance. The President's children's health initiative will extend coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children by 2000 by strengthening Medicaid for poor children, building innovative State programs for working families, and continuing health coverage for children of workers who are between jobs. Today, the Association of American Medical Colleges issued a letter of support for the Clinton Administration's children's health initiative.

Strengthening Medicaid for Poor Children

- **12-Month Continuous Eligibility.** Currently, many children receive Medicaid protection for only part of the year. The President's fiscal year 1998 budget gives States the option to provide one year of continuous Medicaid coverage to children. The budget invests \$3.7 billion over five years, covering an estimated million children who would otherwise be uninsured.
- **Outreach.** The President also proposes to work with the Nation's Governors, communities, advocacy groups, providers, and businesses to develop new ways to reach out to the 3 million children eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid.

Building Innovative State Programs for Children in Working Families

- The President's budget provides \$3.8 billion between 1998 to 2002 (\$750 million a year) in grants to States. States will use these grants to provide insurance for children, leveraging State and private investments in children's coverage through a matching system (as in Medicaid). States have flexibility in designing eligibility rules, benefits (subject to minimums set by the Secretary), and delivery systems.
- The Federal grants, in combination with State and private money, will cover an estimated one million children whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford private coverage. The grant program will also increase Medicaid enrollment by about 400,000 kids since some families interested in the new program will learn that their children are in fact eligible for Medicaid.

Continuing Coverage for Children Whose Parents are Between Jobs

- The President's budget will give States grants to temporarily cover workers between jobs, including their children, at a cost of \$9.8 billion over the budget window. The program, which is structured as a four-year demonstration, will offer temporary assistance (up to 6 months) to families who would otherwise lose their coverage. This assistance may be used to purchase coverage from the worker's former employer (through COBRA) or other private plans, at States' discretion.
- This initiative will help an estimated 3.3 million working Americans and their families, including 700,000 children, in any given year.
- The President's budget also makes it easier for small businesses to establish voluntary purchasing cooperatives, increasing access to insurance for workers and their children.

April 17, 1997

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

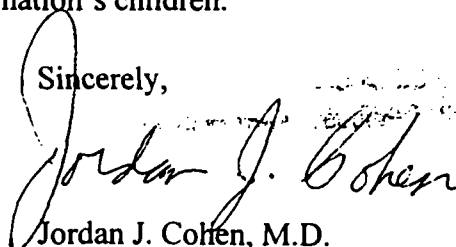
On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to express our strong support for your efforts to extend health care coverage to the ten million American children who are currently without coverage.

Recent studies have shown that the reduction in the availability of health insurance has disproportionately affected children in part due to the decline in employment-based dependent coverage coupled with the general reduction of employment-based coverage. As you know, lack of health insurance coverage has been shown to be a deterrent for individuals both in requesting and receiving care. As a result, many uninsured persons seek treatment for themselves and their family when their condition is more advanced and, as a result, more difficult and expensive to treat. For a child, forgoing needed medical care can have implications that last a lifetime.

The AAMC represents all of the nation's 125 accredited medical schools, approximately 400 major teaching hospitals, including 75 Veterans Affairs medical centers, the faculty of these institutions through 89 constituent academic society members and the more than 160,000 men and women in medical education as students and residents. The AAMC member institutions, which have the multiple missions of education and training, research and direct patient care, are acutely aware of the rise in the number of uninsured Americans, many of whom seek treatment at our institutions.

As you strive to reach an agreement on a balanced budget, the AAMC strongly supports your efforts as well as those on Capitol Hill to include a significant investment to expand health insurance coverage for children. We are prepared to work with you, your staff and members of Congress to achieve this critical objective for our nation's children.

Sincerely,



Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.
President

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S SAFE START INITIATIVE

Announcement

- Today at the White House Early Childhood Development and Learning Conference, the President announced a new Safe Start Initiative to help break the cycle of violence for our nation's youngest victims. The Safe Start Initiative will provide training to law enforcement, prosecutors, school personnel, probation officers, and other professionals to better respond to the needs of children exposed to violence in their homes and communities.

The Problem

- Throughout America, too many children are exposed to violence at home, in their neighborhoods, and in their schools. Children's exposure to violence has been associated with increased depression, anger, substance abuse, and lower academic achievement. Children who experience violence either as victims or witnesses also are at increased risk of becoming violent themselves.
- In a study conducted at Boston City Hospital, 1 out of every 10 children seen in its primary care clinic had witnessed a shooting or stabbing before the age of 6 -- half in their homes and half in the streets. The average age of these children was only 2.7 years old.

The Safe Start Initiative

- The Safe Start Initiative builds on the Child Development-Community Policing Program (CD-CP) started in 1991 between the New Haven Department of Police Services and Yale University Child Study Center, and now funded by the Department of Justice. It was more recently extended to Buffalo, NY; Charlotte, NC; Nashville, TN; and Portland, OR, with Justice Department funding.
- The Safe Start Initiative will increase the number and expand the scope of these regional demonstration sites in which community police officers partner with mental health clinicians to provide rapid and effective treatment to children exposed to violence.
- The Safe Start Initiative will also provide nationwide intensive training and technical assistance for professionals who come into contact with children who have been exposed to family and gang violence, violence in their community and schools, and abuse or neglect.
- Up to 20,000 professionals who work with children in communities across the nation will receive Safe Start training including: law enforcement, prosecutors, school personnel, and probation and parole officers.

MORNING PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Dr. David A. Hamburg, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York

Among the many projects completed in his tenure was the production of *Starting Points*, the 1994 seminal report on early childhood development. Dr. Hamburg has served on numerous policy boards, including his current position on the board of the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. In 1996, President Clinton bestowed onto Dr. Hamburg the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Dr. Donald J. Cohen, Director of the Yale University Child Study Center

The Yale Child Study Center is internationally recognized for its multi disciplinary programs of clinical and basic research, professional education, and clinical services and advocacy for children and families. Dr. Cohen is also the Irving Harris Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics and Psychology at the Yale School of Medicine. His research has focused on urban child development and approaches to intervention, as well as studies of the impact of violence and trauma on children and families in the United States and abroad.

Dr. Carla J. Shatz, Professor of Neurobiology at the University of California, Berkeley

Her ongoing studies of brain development have gained her numerous honors, including the Society for Neuroscience Young Investigator Award in 1985 and the Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Health and Education in 1995. Dr. Shatz is the immediate past president of the 24,000 member Society for Neuroscience.

Dr. Patricia K. Kuhl, Chair of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington

Dr. Kuhl's research focuses on language and speech development, and the results of her studies have illustrated how infants' early experience plays a role in the acquisition of language. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Society, and the Acoustical Society of America.

Dr. Ezra C. Davidson, Jr., Professor of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Los Angeles, California

Dr. Davidson also holds professorships at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Dartmouth School of Medicine. He has led an active career in research, education, and clinical and public service, serving, for example, as president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and as chair of the Secretary of Health and Human Services' Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality. He currently chairs the Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs for the Food and Drug Administration.

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics Emeritus at Harvard Medical School

Dr. Brazelton is a widely acclaimed pediatrician, author, and professor, who has served as president of the Society for Research in Child Development and of the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs. Dr. Brazelton is also an active member of the Child Development Unit at Children's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Deborah Phillips, Director of the Board on Children, Youth and Families of the National Research Council's Commission on Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Institute of Medicine

Dr. Phillips is an expert in child care policy. She was the first Director of the Child Care Information Service of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and serves on numerous advisory groups that address child and family policy issues, including the Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers of the U.S. Administration for Children, Youth and Families.

AFTERNOON PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Arnold Langbo, CEO, The Kellogg Company, Battle Creek, Michigan

Last fall, Kellogg launched "Learning Now!" a community-wide partnership between local business and education leaders to provide practical early brain development information to every Battle Creek parent and caregiver. The campaign includes print, radio and TV ads, mailings to parents with information tailored to the age of their children, and brown-bag lunches in hundreds of businesses. The goal is to ensure that every student arrives at school ready to learn.

Gloria Rodriguez, President and CEO, AVANCE, Inc. Family Support and Education Programs, Texas

The AVANCE Program, founded by Dr. Rodriguez in 1973, is a widely acclaimed community and school-based family support program that serves over 7,000 low-income children and parents a year in predominantly Hispanic communities throughout Texas. AVANCE operates in public housing centers, elementary schools, and through its family service centers. It presents classes on child development and parenting activities, conducts home visits by trained staff, reaches out to fathers, and disseminates information on community services and education classes and job training.

Sheila Amaning, Co-President, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Early Childhood PTA, North Carolina

This Early Childhood PTA gives parents of pre-school age children the opportunity to share ideas with each other and become involved in their children's learning from the start. Ms. Amaning has participated in this Early Childhood PTA since her son was two years old.

Melvin Wearing, Chief of Police, New Haven, Connecticut

With support from the Department of Justice, the New Haven Police Department has partnered with mental health clinicians at the Yale Child Study Center to develop innovative ways in which community police officers can deliver better serve children and families exposed to violence.

Harriet Meyer, Executive Director, Ounce of Prevention, Chicago, Illinois

The Ounce of Prevention Fund combines public resources with private funds to develop and test innovative early intervention strategies for replication. The Ounce's Center for Successful Child Development provides child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, home visits, medical care, and other services to families in public housing. The Ounce's Beethoven Project was one of the models for the federal Early Head Start program established in 1994.

Rob Reiner, Founder, "I Am Your Child" Campaign

The "I Am Your Child" campaign launched this week brings together entertainment leaders, corporations, foundations, elected officials, and early childhood experts to work together to promote family and community involvement in the early stages of young children's lives.

Gov. Bob Miller, Governor of Nevada, Chair of the National Governors' Association and Co-Chair of the National Governors' Association's Children's Task Force

The National Governors' Association has formed the Children's Task Force to explore what actions states can take to enhance early childhood development.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING
April 17, 1997

THE PRESIDENT & MRS. CLINTON
THE VICE PRESIDENT & MRS. GORE

Dr. John Lawrence Aber
Director, National Center for Children in Poverty

Dr. Duane F. Alexander
Director, National Institute of Child Health & Human Development

Ms. Sheila Pegues Amaning
Co-Chair, Early Childhood PTA

Ms. Carolyn Becraft
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families
and Education

Ms. Helen Benham
Scholastic, Inc.

Mrs. Carol Berman
Zero to Three National Center

Ms. Julie Bernas-Pierce
Blind Babies Foundation

Hon. Sheldon C. Bilchik
Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
Department of Justice

Ms. Barbara "Bobbi" Blok
Executive Director, Washington Child Development Council

Dr. Thomas Berry Brazelton
Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

Mr. David V.B. Britt
President & CEO, Children's Television Workshop

Mr. James Larry Brown
Director, Center on Hunger, Poverty & Nutrition Policy, Tufts University

Dr. John Bruer
President, James S. McConnell Foundation

Mr. Shannon Romandos Bryant
Student Team Leader, Jumpstart

Mr. Patrick Butler
Vice President, The Washington Post Company

Hon. Jane L. Campbell
Cuyahoga County Commissioner

Rev. (Dr.) Joan Brown Campbell
General Secretary, National Council of Churches

Ms. Joy Carlson
Director, Children's Environmental Health Network

Hon. (Gov.) Lawton M. Chiles
Governor of Florida

Dr. Harry T. Chugani
Director, PET Center, Children's Hospital of Michigan

Dr. Donald Cohen
Director, Yale University Child Study Center

Dr. Jordan J. Cohen
President, Academy of American Medical Colleges

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

2.

Ms. Janice Cox
President, Georgia State Parent Teacher Association

Mr. Dwayne Crompton
Executive Director, KCMC-Early Child Development Corporation

Ms. Judsen Culbreth
Editor-in-Chief, Working Mother

Ms. Sharon Darling
President, National Center for Family Literacy

Dr. Ezra C. Davidson
Professor & Chairman, Dept. of OBGYN, Charles R. Drew University
of Medicine & Science

Dr. Karen Davis
President, The Commonwealth Fund

Hon. (Rep.) Rosa DeLauro
D/Connecticut

Ms. Barbara Dellinger
Director for Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Head Start

Ms. Deborah Eaton
President, National Association for Family Child Care

Ms. Marian Wright Edelman
President, Children's Defense Fund

Ms. Isela Flores

Ms. Yolie Flores Aguilar
Los Angeles, CA

Dr. Henry W. Foster
Acting President, Meharry Medical College

Ms. Ellen Galinsky
Co-President, Family & Work Institute

Hon. (Dr.) John H. Gibbons
Director, Office of Science & Technology Policy

Ms. Ellen Gilbert
International Creative Management

Hon. Daniel Glickman
Secretary of Agriculture

Mrs. Katharine Graham
Chairman of the Board, The Washington Post Company

Ms. Sarah Greene
Chief Executive Officer, National Head Start Association, Partnership Project

Dr. Stanley Greenspan
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics, George Washington Medical School

Ms. Elinor Guggenheimer
Child Care Action Campaign

Dr. Megan Gunnar
University of Minnesota

Ms. Margaret Hale
Executive Director, West Virginia Kids Count

Ms. Martha D. Haley
Director, Public Affairs, Lifetime Television

Dr. David Alan Hamburg
President, Carnegie Corporation of New York

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

3.

Dr. Robert E. Hannemann
President, American Academy of Pediatrics

Hon. (Sen.) Thomas R. Harkin
D/Iowa

Mr. Irving Harris
Chairman, The Harris Foundation

Mr. William Harris
KidsPAC, Head Start

Dr. Jane M. Healy
Author

Ms. Judith Nolte Heimer
Editor-in-Chief, American Baby Magazine

Mrs. Teresa Heinz
Chairman, Heinz Family Foundation

Ms. Harriet Meyer Horwitz
Executive Director, Ounce of Prevention Fund

Mr. Jeffrey Jacobs
President, Harpo Entertainment, Inc.

Ms. Eloise Jenks
President, National Association of WIC Directors

Ms. Judith Marie Jerald
Brattleboro, VT

Dr. Gloria Johnson-Powell
Judge Baker Children's Center

Ms. Judith E. Jones
Director, Free to Grow

Hon. Elena Kagan
Office of Domestic Policy, The White House

Dr. Elaine C. Kamarck
Office of the Vice President

Hon. (Sen.) Edward M. Kennedy
D/Massachusetts

Dr. Patricia Kuhl
Professor & Chair, Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences
University of Washington

Dr. J. Ronald Lally
Director, Center for Child & Family Studies, WestED

Dr. Philip J. Landrigan
Director, Office of Children's Environment Health, EPA

Mr. Arnold Langbo
Chairman of the Board & CEO, Kellogg Corporation

Mr. Ralph S. Larsen
Chairman and CEO, Johnson & Johnson

Dr. David M. Lawrence
CEO, Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program

Ms. Geraldine B. Laybourne
President, Disney/ABC Cable Networks

Ms. Dolores Leckey
Executive Director for the Secretariat, Catholic Conference

Dr. Arthur Leibowitz
Chief Medical Officer, AETNA US Healthcare

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

4.

Dr. Michael Levine
Program Officer, Carnegie Corporation of New York

Mr. David Liederman
Executive Director, Child Welfare League of America

Dr.Carolynn Lindeman
National President, Music Educators National Conference

Dr. Evelyn Gruss Lipper
Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Cornell Medical Center

Ms. Melissa Ludtke
Author

Dr. Shirley M. Malcom
Director of Education, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Rear Admiral Larry R. Marsh
Bureau of Naval Personnel

Mr. Lawrence A. McAndrews
President & CEO, National Association of Children's Hospitals

Dr. Bruce McEwen
President, Society for Neuroscience, Rockefeller University

Ms. Gail McGovern
AT&T

Mr. Matthew Melmed
Executive Director, Zero to Three National Center for Infants

Hon. (Gov.) Robert J. Miller
Governor of Nevada

Dr. Evelyn K. Moore
Executive Director, National Black Child Development Institute

Dr. Herbert L. Needleman
University of Pittsburgh Medical School

Dr. David Olds
University of Colorado

Dr. Bruce Perry
Senior Fellow, CIVITAS Initiatives

Dr. Carol Brunson Phillips
Executive Director, Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition

Dr. Deborah Phillips
Director, Board on Children, Youth & Families, National Academy of Sciences

Dr. Bruce Ramirez
The Council for Exceptional Children

Mrs. Michele Singer Reiner
Castlerock Entertainment

Mr. Robert Reiner
Castlerock Entertainment

Ms. Barbara Reisman
Executive Director, Child Care Action Campaign

Mr. James J. Renier
Renier & Associates

Ms. Nan H. Rich
National President, National Council of Jewish Women

Dr. Julius Richmond
Professor of Health Policy, Emeritus, Harvard University Medical School

Mr. John E. Riggan
Chairman of the Board, National Association of Child Advocates

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

5.

Hon. Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education

Ms. Geraldine Robinson
The Children's Museum

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez
President and CEO, Avance Family Support & Education Program

Ms. Susan Roman
Executive Director, American Libraries Association Services to Children

Hon. (Gov.) Roy R. Romer
Governor of Colorado

Mr. Edward F. Rover
Charles A. Dana Foundation

Ms. Esperanza Segura

Mr. Rudy Segura

Honorable Donna E. Shalala
Secretary of Health & Human Services

Dr. Carla J. Shatz
Professor of Neurobiology, Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Mr. Jack Shifrel
Community Advocate

Ms. Marilyn Smith
Executive Director, National Association for the Education of Young Children

Mr. Marshall Smith
Acting Deputy Secretary of Education

Mr. Richard M. Smith
Editor-in-Chief & President, Newsweek, Inc.

Dr. Mary Susan Stine
Section Chief of Developmental Medicine, DuPont Hospital for Children

Ms. Maria Gregory Taylor
Parent Education Specialist, Parents as Teachers Program

Ms. Inez Moore Tenenbaum
President, South Carolina Center for Family Policy

Ms. Ruth Tracy
Navajo Chapter Coordinator, Pilot Parents

Mr. Thomas Van Coverden
President and CEO, National Association of Community Health Centers

Dr. Harold Varmus
Director, National Institutes of Health

Hon. Melanne Verveer
Assistant to the President & Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Ms. Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director, National Association of Child Care Resource
and Referral Agencies

Mr. David Walker
Executive Director, North Carolina Partnership for Children

Ms. Claudia Wayne
Executive Director, National Center for the Early Childhood Workforce

Mr. Melvin Wearing
Chief of Police, City of New Haven

Dr. Betsy Weaver

President & CEO, Parent's Plus, Inc.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

6.

Ms. Bernice S. Weissbourd

President, Family Focus

Dr. Miriam Westheimer

Executive Director, HIPPY USA

Dr. Clarissa Leister Willis

Executive Director, Southern Early Childhood Association

Ms. Mildred Winter

Executive Director, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

Ms. Marti Worshtil

College Park, MD

Dr. Ernst L. Wynder

President, American Health Foundation

Dr. Edward Zigler

Professor of Psychology, Yale University

Dr. Barry Zuckerman

Professor & Chairman of Pediatrics, Boston Medical Center

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

Today, the President and First Lady are hosting ***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 highlights new scientific findings on brain development in very young children and points to the importance of children's earliest experiences in helping them get off to a strong and healthy start and reach their full potential.

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 80 locations across the country. The satellite conferences will be co-hosted by regional federal agencies, local officials, and children's and other organizations.

PANEL 2 PARTICIPANTS

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JEN —
KLEIN
2FL/WW

Harriet Meyer. Biography

Harriet Meyer received her undergraduate degree from Syracuse University and her graduate degree from Middlebury College after completing most of her studies in Paris, France. Upon graduation Ms. Meyer worked in the international department of a major corporation, where she traveled extensively in Europe, Australia, and Africa before beginning her tenure in the family support arena.

As an Ounce of Prevention staff member, Ms. Meyer was responsible for the physical development of a comprehensive child care center in the Robert Taylor high-rise public housing complex. This center served families through the prenatal period until their children reached age three. The "Beethoven Project", as it later became known, has since become a model for child care centers across the country.

Ms. Meyer then directed the Wells Community Initiative for three years, coordinating this public/private partnership with Chicago Public Housing, community residents, and community-based agencies to revitalize the Ida B. Wells public housing complex.

Ms. Meyer was named Executive Director of the Ounce in 1991. She has been involved in the development of a variety of innovative prevention programs at the Ounce and in raising public awareness about policies affecting children and families through her work with the Ounce's policy arm, the Kids Public Education and Policy Project.

As Executive Director, Ms. Meyer has overseen the Ounce's expansion in many areas including Early Head Start services for families with children 0-3 years of age, an elementary school-based health center, and a renowned sexual abuse prevention education program, Heart to Heart.

A leading advocate for efforts to support the health and well-being of children, particularly children in the developmentally critical early years, Ms. Meyer has testified at the state and national levels on many occasions. She has been a member of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers and the U.S. Department of Education Working Group on Comprehensive Services. Ms. Meyer has made regular appearances on television and radio news and talk programs focused on child development and early intervention. A joint interview with Ms. Meyer and two other child development professionals is featured in the October/November 1996 issue of Zero to Three.

At the Ounce of Prevention Fund, we see the new and heightened scrutiny surrounding the financing and implementation of welfare programs as an unusual opportunity to expand the growing consensus in this country that prevention programs save lives and dollars. We believe that prevention is a humane and cost-effective strategy. We promote it through a three-pronged approach of research, experimental program implementation, and policy advocacy. We continually seek to play the most effective role we can in the cycle of research, program, and policy.

First and foremost, as this biennial report indicates over and over again, prevention programs save scarce public resources. The cost of supporting a family to ensure its members can live together in a healthy and nurturing environment is pocket change compared to the cost of maintaining children in foster care. The cost of developmental childcare and Head Start to pave the way for school success is negligible when compared to the consequences of school failure including substance abuse, premature parenthood, and prison. The cost of providing affordable family medical care along with an explanation on how to use it is trivial compared to the cost of hospital treatment made necessary by neglected health. In fact, painstakingly crafted prevention programs are among the most fiscally conservative human service efforts.

We are proud to be in the forefront of community-based prevention in Illinois. Our work with children and families is grounded in scientific research and the careful examination of successful predecessor programs. With this approach we individually tailor services for each Illinois community and participant. We help educate the public by conducting internal research, cooperating with outside researchers, working with the press, and documenting our results in publications that explain what makes prevention programs effective.

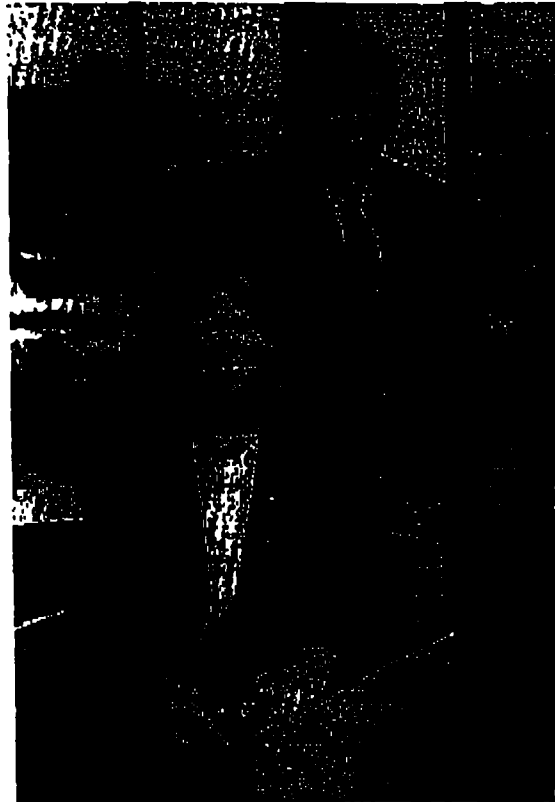
The Ounce of Prevention Fund is particularly proud of the recent development of the Early Head Start program at the federal level. We believe that the process leading to the creation of Early Head Start represents the best the Ounce has to offer in the cycle of research, experimental program implementation, and policy advocacy. For nine years, the Ounce has worked with families with very young children at our Center for Successful Child Development (CSCD) in the Robert Taylor Homes on Chicago's south side. Based on community input and program evaluation, CSCD has evolved and changed over this time. Last year, Harriet Meyer shared our lessons from CSCD as a member of a federal advisory committee that evaluated programs and approaches for children between infancy and three years of age. This committee developed the framework for a new Early Head Start program to serve children

three years old and younger, bringing the research, program, and policy cycle to completion. As this biennial report goes to press, Ounce staff are developing program and evaluation elements for our recently awarded Early Head Start program (one of sixty-eight in the country) to further refine and improve the work we do.

More new and exciting ventures at the Ounce merit mention in this letter than we could possibly address. Of special interest are activities at our school-based health centers, the addition of Casa Central as a third Head Start delegate, the expansion of Aunt Martha's Head Start program with the opening of a Riverdale site to serve fifty-one children, and policy work related to welfare reform. As

with the development of our Early Head Start program, each of these new ventures shares a common approach of applying the most updated research to program implementation, evaluating what we have done right and wrong, and then spreading the word about how social service programs need to develop in Illinois and the United States.

Thank you for taking the time to review our work in this report. Your continued input and analysis is part of what makes us successful. Please continue to share with us your thoughts and perspectives as we continue to foster the research, program, and policy cycle in the best interests of the families and children of Illinois.



Harriet Meyer

Harriet Meyer
Executive Director

Irving B. Harris

Irving B. Harris
Chairman of the Board

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

MELVIN H. WEARING

Melvin H. Wearing is the Chief of Police for the New Haven Department of Police Service in New Haven, Connecticut. He is the first African-American to attain this position as well as his previous rank of Assistant Chief of Police. As chief, he is responsible for the overall operation and management of the department which has a sworn strength of 443 and 125 civilian employees.

During his 28 year career with the department, Chief Wearing has steadily risen through the ranks. In 1968, he began his career as a police officer. After 5 years of street assignments, he was appointed to Detective in 1973 and assigned to the Investigative Services Unit. For the next 10 years, he conducted investigations in the Narcotics, Gambling, and Robbery/Burglary Units until his promotion to Sergeant in 1984. As a first-line supervisor, Wearing was assigned to both the Patrol and Investigative Services Units for 3 years until he was promoted to Lieutenant.

As a Lieutenant, in 1988, Wearing was the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the Narcotics Enforcement Unit where he supervised a staff of 10 detectives and was responsible for coordinating joint operations with state and federal law enforcement agencies. His administrative and supervisory capabilities were key factors in his 1991 assignment to Chief of Detectives in Investigative Services. In that capacity, he was responsible for overseeing all major criminal investigations and the supervision of 75 detectives of over a dozen specialized units including the Bureau of Identification, Corporation Counsel, Major Crimes, Criminal Intelligence, Robbery, Narcotics, Arson, Firearms, Juvenile Services, Sexual Assault and Family Violence. After serving 2 years in this position, Wearing was appointed Assistant Chief of Police in 1993.

Chief Wearing is a graduate of the University of New Haven and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Administration. He attended and completed training in management and leadership at the Yale University/City of New Haven Management Training Institute. In 1992, he was selected to attend the prestigious Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, a training program for middle and upper level managers in the public and private sectors. He has participated in numerous training seminars over the years, including programs offered by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Connecticut Office of the State's Attorney.

As one of the original Fellows of Yale Child Study Center's Child Development/Community Policing Program, Chief Wearing played an important role in the implementation of this unique collaboration between the Police Department and the Child Study Center. The program is multi-faceted in its objectives: immediate crisis intervention for children who were witnesses to, or victims of violence; training in child development and psychology for police officers and supervisors; a consultation and referral service. Melvin Wearing is co-author of "The Police-Mental Health Partnership: A Community-Based Response to Urban Violence," published by Yale University Press in 1995. The CD/CP program has been recognized nationally as a pioneer initiative in providing intervention through a previously unheralded delivery system--the officer on the beat. The national focus on the partnership has become so widespread that funding is now available through the federal government for police departments across the country to replicate the program.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: MELVIN H. WEARING

Page two

Chief Wearing is a member of many professional and social organizations including the Yale University Child Study Center, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and Police Executive Research Forum. He is a steering committee member for the Family Campus Initiative, a family-focused and child-centered collaboration among the city, public schools, and Yale University. He is a member of the New Haven County Silver Shields, a fraternal organization of minority police officers, New Haven County Detectives Association, Connecticut State Police Association, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Midnight Basketball Association (MBA). He is a former member of the Board of Directors for Community Mediation, Inc., the oldest non-profit community based mediation program in Connecticut.

Locally, he is one of the founders as well as current Chair of the New Haven Mentoring Program: Police, Fire, and Schools, which has paired over 60 youngsters with police officers and fire fighters in one-to-one relationships. He continually recruits to bring new mentors into the program. As a long standing member of the Knickerbocker Club, he has helped to introduce students to the fine sport of golf.

Throughout his career, Wearing has received numerous honors and awards. In addition to many letters of appreciation from citizens and colleagues, he has officially been awarded by the department, Letters of Commendation, Certificates of Commendation, and a Certificate of Meritorious Service for professionalism, bravery, and excellence in police work. He was the recipient of a Youth Service Award from the New Haven Board of Young Adult Police Commissioners, and an Outstanding Public Service Achievement Award from the New Haven County Silver Shields. In 1994, he was presented the Special Recognition Freedom Award by the NAACP for "distinguished achievements in his career...., fine and reverent character that is a model for youth and colleagues alike...., his unassuming manner which has not been changed by phenomenal success." In 1995, during Omega Psi Phi Fraternity's achievement Awards Week, he was named Citizen of the Year. In 1996, he was received the Man of the Year Award from the New Haven Chapter of the National Association of Negro Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., for dedicated service and commitment to the youth of the community.

Historical Note: As a police officer in 1974, Melvin Wearing was a main affiant in the precedent-setting case, New haven County Silver Shields v. City of New Haven Police Department. The suit alleged that the city used unfair hiring, promotional and job assignment practices against minorities. The Silver Shields, a fraternal organization of minority police officers, emerged victorious, and from that point on, the New haven Police Department was mandated by court decree to hire and promote more minorities. The was instrumental in improving the city's hiring practices.

Gloria G. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer
AVANCE, Inc. Family Support and Education Programs

A San Antonio native, Dr. Gloria G. Rodriguez is founder, National President and Chief Executive Officer of AVANCE Inc. Family Support and Education Program. Since its establishment in 1973, AVANCE has become a nationally recognized model and pioneer of parent education, family support and fatherhood education programs. The agency serves over 7,000 parents and children each year throughout Texas with 250 employees, many volunteers, and a \$7 million annual budget. AVANCE has been visited by Prince Charles, First Lady Barbara Bush, First Lady of Mexico Araceli Salinas de Gotari, Governor Ann Richards and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. AVANCE was cited in Barbara Bush's book, *First Teachers*, as one of ten outstanding programs in family literacy, and in First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's book, *It Takes a Village*. AVANCE has been featured in *The New York Times*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *ABC World News Tonight*, *Good Morning America*, Univision, the *MacNeil Lehrer NewsHour* and Telemundo.

Dr. Rodriguez has received local and national recognition, and been invited to speak and present testimony on parent and family support issues throughout the country. She is the recipient of the first Attitude Award for changing public attitudes toward family support services presented by the Lifetime Nationally Syndicated Program in 1990. She was inducted into the San Antonio Hall of Fame and Texas Women Hall of Fame and is included at the U.T. Barker Center of Texas History. Dr. Rodriguez received the Benitia Humanitarian Award in 1996, the Matt Garcia Public Service Award from the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, *Parent's Magazine* Social Action Award in 1994, the Temple Award for Creative Altruism from the National Institute of Noetic Science in 1992, and was named Woman of the Year by the *San Antonio Light* newspaper in 1981. She was featured in *Hispanic Business Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential national Hispanic Women in 1988 and was included in *Notable Hispanic American Women* in 1992. Dr. Rodriguez was also selected to Leadership America (1992), *World's Who's Who* (1992), *Who's Who Among Hispanic Americans* (1991), the National Hispana Leadership Institute (1989), Leadership Texas (1987), Leadership San Antonio (1981), Outstanding Women of America (1977, 1979).

Dr. Rodriguez was a delegate to the White House Conference on Families, and, by presidential appointment, served as part of the United States Delegation to the United Nations International Commission on the Status of Women, and currently, the Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. She was selected to participate in a two-week child care/family policy study of France in 1989 by the French American Foundation. She has been invited to speak at state and national conferences, to foundation, university, business, government and elected officials throughout the country, and at congressional and presidential hearings. She has spoken at the National Municipal League of Cities, the Forum of Public Affairs at the J.F. Kennedy School of Government, the Smithsonian Institute, the Aspen Institute and the Summer Institute of the Council of Chief State School Officers. She has served as a consultant to the federal government, *Parent's Magazine*, Whittle Communication's *La Familia De Hoy Magazine*, Mr. Roger's Corporation, The Work Family Institute, the Harvard Family Research Project, Georgetown University and the Yale Bush Center.

She served on the founding Board of the National Family Resource Coalition, the Parent Action Board, the National Council on Families in America Board, the Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children, and currently, on the Christian Children's Fund Board. She served as an Advisory Member to the GEMS Television Board and co-chaired the San Antonio 2000 Ready to Learn Task Force. She also served on the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating Council, was appointed to Governor Ann Richard's Transition Team in Early Childhood Education, and served as Chair of the Governor's Head Start Collaboration Task Force.

Dr. Rodriguez received her Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Texas at Austin, and her Masters of Education and B.A. in Bilingual Education from Our Lady of the Lake University. She is married to Salvador C. Rodriguez and has three children.



AVANCE

AVANCE is a comprehensive, community and school-based family support program funded by private companies, foundations, state and federal sources, whose main purpose is to strengthen families.

Our mission: By providing support and education services to low-income families, AVANCE strives to strengthen the family unit; to enhance parenting skills which nurture the optimal development of children; to promote educational success, and to foster the personal and economic success of parents. The focus of AVANCE is community-based intervention which is family centered, preventive, comprehensive and continuous through integration and collaboration of services.

"Twenty-(three) years ago, a young first-grade teacher was appalled that the schools and community had given up on so many Hispanic children. Gloria G. Rodriguez, a member of the Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children, was herself a poor child of the barrios. She decided that to give these youngsters a fair chance, their nurture and education had to start at the very beginning of their lives. Parents would have to be trained to be their babies' first teachers. With the help of the Zale Foundation in Dallas and a determined door-to-door search in a housing project to recruit mothers and fathers, Rodriguez, now its president and chief executive officer, founded AVANCE." Excerpt from "AVANCE, a response that works", Carnegie Quarterly, Spring, 1994.

The AVANCE program evolved into a comprehensive, continuous program by responding to the needs of the community. There is door-to-door recruitment of the parents and children. Parents are treated with dignity and respect. All services are bilingual and are located in predominantly Hispanic communities. All services, strategies, and program design are culturally sensitive and appropriate. As participants take part in parenting classes, community is built among neighbors, self esteem is increased and personal goals are set. Participants are also educated about their rights as parents, are encouraged to take an active role in shaping their community through neighborhood watches and other collaboratives, and are introduced to resources such as public libraries, community colleges, public transportation, public health services, housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention counseling and other collaborative services. The parenting classes are followed by ESL, GED and college classes and job skills training for the parents. After the 0-3 Parenting / Early Childhood Program, the children follow a sequential path including Head Start, tutoring, mentoring, recreation and, eventually, college.

Proven results: An extensive scientific evaluation funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York found that AVANCE program mothers reported and had more nurturing attitudes towards their children, an enhanced view of self as their child's teacher, increased parental knowledge and skills, and increased knowledge and use of community resources. Upon graduation from the parent education program, significantly more program participants elected to continue their education by enrolling in continuing education classes. The high-risk population which AVANCE serves is characterized by several generations living in poverty, an 80-percent high school dropout rate among parents, a high degree of stress and isolation, lack of knowledge of child growth and development, significantly high potential for child abuse and neglect, and lack of sellable job skills. A 17-year follow-up study of 74% of the first group of Latino parents and children found that 94% of children who attended AVANCE had either completed High School, received their GED or were still attending high school, and 43 percent were attending college. In contrast, 91 percent of their mothers had dropped out of school. After completing the AVANCE parenting program, 57 percent of those mothers returned to complete their GED, and 64 percent of the mothers in that group attended a college or technical program.

AVANCE chapters are located in San Antonio, Houston, the Rio Grande Valley, Corpus Christi and Dallas serving over 7,000 individuals. Chapters are will open early in 1997 in El Paso, Laredo and Kansas City.



Kellogg's.

Arnold G. Langbo

Chairman of the Board
Chief Executive Officer
Kellogg Company

Arnold G. Langbo has been Kellogg Company's chairman of the board and chief executive officer since January 1, 1992.

Mr. Langbo joined Kellogg Canada Inc. in November 1956 as a sales representative in Vancouver. Following other assignments in Prince George, Winnipeg, and Toronto, he transferred in 1967 to the company's International Division in Battle Creek, Michigan. In 1969, he was appointed administrative assistant to the president of Kellogg Company.

Mr. Langbo returned to Canada in September 1970 as executive vice president of the Canadian company in London, Ontario. In 1971, he moved to the headquarters in Toronto as vice president — sales and marketing of both Kellogg Canada and Salada Foods, Ltd., then a Kellogg subsidiary. In January 1976, Mr. Langbo was appointed president and chief executive officer of Kellogg Salada Canada Ltd. Inc.

In November 1978, Mr. Langbo returned to Battle Creek as president of the newly established U.S. Food Products Division of Kellogg Company. He was named corporate vice president in September 1979, and executive vice president in August 1981.

Mr. Langbo assumed the title of president, Mrs. Smith's Frozen Foods Co. in January 1983, then became its chairman and chief executive officer in November 1985. He was named group executive vice president, Kellogg Company in January 1983. In June 1986, he was appointed president of Kellogg International. Mr. Langbo was elected president, chief operating officer and director of Kellogg Company in December 1990.

Mr. Langbo is a member of the board of directors of Johnson & Johnson and the Whirlpool Corporation. He is chairman of the Albion College Board of Trustees. He also serves on the board of directors of the Grocery Manufacturers of America, International Youth Foundation, the advisory board of the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University, and a member of the policy committee of The Business Roundtable.

Mr. Langbo was born in Richmond, British Columbia, on April 13, 1937. He attended the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He and his wife, Martha, reside in Battle Creek, Michigan. They've raised eight children.

Plan targets kids

Businesses join educators in aiding children's potential

BILL MILLER
The Enquirer

Battle Creek's businesses and schools today launched a program to educate parents and caregivers of small children on the need for mental stimulation in the earliest years.

In a breakfast presentation, the Greater Battle Creek CEO Forum and Educator's Task Force unveiled Learning Now!, a three-year program to boost early childhood development and better prepare children for school.

"I don't know of anything undertaken in recent history that would have (as much) positive impact if we succeed in this program," Joseph Stewart, Kellogg Co. senior vice president and forum member, said.

Many of the problems of young people, he said, "whether dropout rates, substance abuse, you name it, these are all problems that stem from a child's development, and in some way are related to realization of his or her full human potential."

The groups plan to:

- Blanket the community with information in the months ahead - from inserts in employees' pay envelopes to print and TV advertising and fliers.

- The materials will direct people to a telephone number to call, where they can sign up to have information sent to them regularly, corresponding to their child's development stage.

- Parent-educators will be recruited to provide training for parents and caregivers.

Community leaders are using the strongest terms to emphasize the effort, which was detailed this morning at the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce's Eye-Opener Breakfast at McCamly Plaza Hotel.

"I think it's tremendously important - we've placed a high priority on this," Robert Grimes, superintendent

of Pennfield Schools and task force chairman, said.

The entire effort will cost about \$150,000, with schools and businesses splitting the cost, he said.

The countywide statistics are clear:

- Some 38 percent of children entering kindergarten are behind in their development, according to a survey by Calhoun County Communities in Schools Inc., the agency administering the Learning Now! program.

- Slightly less than half of fourth and seventh grade students meet basic math skills on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests.

- The high school dropout rate rocketed from 4.5 percent in 1991-92 to 10.5 percent in 1994-95, according to Kids Count in Michigan.

The program's aim is to start reversing those statistics.

WHO IT'S FOR

Who are the groups trying to reach? Literally, every person who cares for a child through age 5, regardless of their economic status.

That means families like those of Richard and Mary Ann Taylor, who have a newborn daughter, Annamarie, and sons, ages 3 and 5.

Richard is a local investment executive and Mary Ann is a tax attorney.

"It's very important to maximize the potential for our kids," Mary Ann said, and who is familiar with the recent studies showing the importance of early brain development.

Annamarie, who was born at Battle Creek Health System last Thursday, "is doing great," her mother said. "We talk to her when she's awake, and try not to put her down. Her brothers talk to her, and she responds.

"We're conscious about not excluding her from a lot of activities. We know now that excluding is the wrong answer, and helping her explore now is important."

Learning Now! also is for parents like Janet Person, who recently adopted Tai Allyn, 2, who was born addicted to drugs.

Person, named 1996 Foster Parent of the Year by the Calhoun

County Family Independence Agency, cares for several other young foster children and two teenage grandchildren.

With Tai, she said, "I fell in love with her the day they gave her to me, and she looked at me with those great big eyes."

Tai, she said, is big for her age, and advanced in her development. She's already in a dance class.

"Every night I read a story to them," she said. "And every morning, we have 'Good morning love,' where I sit and rock them until they're ready to get down.

"I have one foster child, he's 3 and mentally, he's year and a half. His family didn't seem to notice he's behind.

"And some of the foster children I've got don't want hugs or kisses. One baby I had a year, when he first came, he cruised the couch all day. I had to gradually hold him, a little more each day."

HOW IT STARTED

An initiative to improve student educational performance began two years ago with formation of the CEO Forum.

It joined with the existing Educator's Task Force to promote and implement local involvement in the federal School-to-Work program aimed at broadening educational, career and economic opportunities for youth.

Learning Now! is the second joint effort of the two groups, and is based on new research.

"It shows brain development of the first three years is much more rapid than previously thought, and education potential is determined during that time" said Leslie McCarley, executive director of Calhoun County Communities in Schools, the agency administering the Learning Now! program.

"During the first three to four years, glucose metabolizes very rapidly, then it kind of stabilizes, and plateaus." Synapses, or the wires between brain cells, are formed, and a lot of learning goes on.

"As a result of this research, these groups decided the information was

important enough that it should be widely disseminated," she said. "There's a sense that on the part of parents and caregivers in particular, there might be an information void. Learning Now! is designed to help address that void."

Even though the research has gotten national media attention, McCarley said, it's important that it be addressed locally on a regular basis to the people giving care.

HOW IT WORKS

Print and TV ads, direct mailings and posters now being prepared all point toward the new Learning Now! phone number: 660-5857.

"(Everyone) can sign up to receive information through the mail on a regular basis," McCarley said. "For parents with children under age 1, they'll get information every other month. For parents of children 1 to 5, they'll get information twice a year."

"This will include not only a parent directory that has resources where to go for assistance, but also hands on, how-to information on what a parent can do to stimulate brain development in their child."

Developmental benchmarks are important, she said: "What kinds of immunizations your child should have received by now, what kinds of things should your child be doing now."

"It's important to know if your child is supposed to be sitting up, and isn't, or if your child should be able to sort colors by now, and isn't."

None of the advice is dramatically new, McCarley said, but just reading Dr. Spock isn't enough anymore.

"We are a completely different society than 20 years ago," she said, "and knowing how to be a good parent isn't necessarily passed down. People don't necessarily live close to support systems like they used to."

The campaign, she said, starts at birth and builds at the appropriate developmental stages, with information for each of those ages. It leads up to the kinds of things your child needs to know when they enter kindergarten.

Between 1,400 and 2,000 Calhoun County children are in each of seven stages between birth and age 5, she said.

The stages are: Birth to 3 months; 3 to 6 months; 6 to 12 months; 1 to 2 years; 2 to 3 years; 3 to 4 years; and 4 to 5 years.

Two other key parts of the program:

● A full-time parent educator will be hired to conduct seminars - in business, schools, churches, wherever

they're asked to go.

● Support by businesses of all kinds is critical, for allowing information to be distributed in workplaces either through pay-check stuffers or brown-bag lunches.

Different stages of the program will be conducted over the next three years. Evaluation will be done,

McCarley said, by measuring changes in kindergarten readiness, and through statistics such as the annual Kids Count surveys.

For now, the campaign focuses on the greater Battle Creek area, but Communities in Schools hopes to expand it countywide if other groups provide the money and support.

COALITION BUILDING

Learning Now! is a whole-community effort, Kellogg's Stewart emphasized.

The aim of the CEO Forum and Educator's Task Force, he said, "is to create different kind of cooperative working relationships between business and education in our community, and to begin to have a real impact ... on the performance of our young people."

For years, he said, "the business community has had a concern about the quality of people in the work force and the weakening of some basic skills, like reading, math and science, and how those things require business to invest in additional training."

He said businesses, like many parts of society, talked about what's

wrong with schools. But then the CEO Forum realized that "we, too, have failed ... to be involved in the right way."

Learning Now! is expected to be funded by CEO Forum and Educator's Task Force members, and relies heavily on in-kind support by all businesses and educators.

Much will depend on business contributions, they said. And each school system will help cover the cost of parent educators.

Stewart expects Learning Now! to be actively supported by all parts of the community. More than 100 people were expected to attend this morning's breakfast, and a Thursday appearance by Dr. Harry Chugani, a pioneering researcher in early-childhood development, is sold out.

"Businesses alone cannot succeed in this," Stewart said. "It will take health-care providers, schools, churches and social service agencies."

Grimes added, "We all have the same goals, to do what's best for young kids....You get a lot done if everybody works together."

To: Jen 69412

just in case you didn't have...

April 7, 1997

Nich

MEMORANDUM FOR MELANNE VERVEER

FROM: JOHN HILLEY *John Hilley*
JANET MURGUA *JM*

Subject: White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning

Attached for your review are Legislative Affairs recommendations for Member involvement in the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. We have pared down our list and feel strongly that these Members will best represent the Hill. It is our understanding that Legislative Affairs can use ten slots for the conference to accommodate Members (ten slots in the morning and ten in the afternoon session) and an additional five slots for their constituents. Please contact us once you have reviewed our list or should you have any concerns. Thank you.

Speakers on Panel II

Senator Kennedy ?

Rep. Goodling

Attending Panel I and Lunch

Rep. Goodling	(Education and Workforce Committee)
Rep. Clay	(Education and Workforce Committee)
Sen. Jeffords	(Health and Human Services Committee)
Sen. Kennedy	(Health and Human Services Committee)
Sen. Daschle	(Leadership)
Sen. Lott	(Leadership)
Rep. Gephardt	(Leadership)
Rep. Gingrich	(Leadership)
Rep. Armey	(Leadership)

DeLauro

Attending Panel II

Rep. Riggs	(Subcmte. On Early Childhood, Youth and Families)
Rep. Martinez	(Subcmte. On Early Childhood, Youth and Families)
Rep. Porter	(LHHS Appropriations)
Rep. Obey	(LHHS Appropriations)
Sen. Specter	(LHHS Appropriations)
Sen. Harkin	(LHHS Appropriations)

Additional Members to invite

Sen. Wellstone

Sen. Landrieu

Sen. Tim Johnson

Sen. Kohl

Rep. DeLauro

Rep. Conyers

Rep. Roemer

Rep. Tauscher

Nicole R. Rabner

04/14/97 07:56:36 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Christa Robinson/OPD/EOP
cc: Pauline M. Abernathy/OPD/EOP, Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP
Subject: luncheon seating

I know that you are working on the draft luncheon seating for the Conference. The following are some thoughts for HRC's table:

Ed Zigler, Yale or Julius Richmond, Harvard
Ron Lally, WestEd
Katharine Graham, Wash Post
Marian Wright Edelman, CDF
Sharon Darling, National Center for Family Literacy
Ralph Larsen, CEO, J&J OR David Laurence, CEO, Kaiser Permanente
Geraldine Laybourne, Disney/ABC
Mirian Westheimer, Exec Dir, HIPPI USA
Gov. Roy Romer

We shd also have another "principal's table" (POTUS if he comes, perhaps MEG -- TBD later today) that includes:

Gov. Miller
Irving Harris or Theresa Heinz
Larsen or Laurance (CEO's)
Stanley Greenspan
Julius Richmond, Harvard or Zigler
Bernice Weisbourd
Dwayne Crompton
Elinor Gugginheimer
Rev. Joan Brown Campbell

I'm sure you are getting the updated acceptance list from Kim today and you might have some other ideas re: seating. The most important thing, as we discussed, is that we fill each table with a broad-based group of people.

Thanks, Christa!

Results of conf.

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.



Patricia F. Lewis

04/08/97 01:22:30 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Release - to go out following news conference

**THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF MEDIA AFFAIRS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 1997

Contact: 202/456-7150

**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.

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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.

- 30-30-30-

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Alison Muscatine/WHO/EOP

● Stacey L. Rubin

04/09/97 01:55:52 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: Thanks for a great lunch....here's the memo we sent to Melanne [b]

April 7, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR MELANNE VERVEER

FROM: JOHN HILLEY
JANET MURGUIA

Subject: White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning

Attached for your review are Legislative Affairs recommendations for Member involvement in the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. We have pared down our list and feel strongly that these Members will best represent the Hill. It is our understanding that Legislative Affairs can use ten slots for the conference to accommodate Members (ten slots in the morning and ten in the afternoon session) and an additional five slots for their constituents. Please contact us once you have reviewed our list or should you have any concerns. Thank you.

Speakers on Panel II

Senator Kennedy

Rep. Goodling

Attending Panel I and Lunch

Rep. Goodling (Education and Workforce Committee)

Rep. Clay (Education and Workforce Committee)

Sen. Jeffords (Health and Human Services Committee)

Sen. Kennedy (Health and Human Services Committee)

Sen. Daschle (Leadership)

Sen. Lott (Leadership)

Rep. Gephardt (Leadership)

Rep. Gingrich (Leadership)
Rep. Armey (Leadership)

Attending Panel II

Rep. Riggs (Subcmte. On Early Childhood, Youth and Families)
Rep. Martinez (Subcmte. On Early Childhood, Youth and Families)
Rep. Porter (LHHS Appropriations)
Rep. Obey (LHHS Appropriations)
Sen. Specter (LHHS Appropriations)
Sen. Harkin (LHHS Appropriations)

Additional Members to invite

Sen. Wellstone

Sen. Landrieu

Sen. Tim Johnson

Sen. Kohl

Rep. DeLauro

Rep. Conyers

Rep. Roemer

Rep. Tauscher

BC-JOAN-COLUMN:TB op-ed:R

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

(AT-RISK)

By Joan Beck

Chicago Tribune

(KRT)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parents need more ideas about brain-nourishing activities. They need more

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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(Joan Beck is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune. Readers may write to her care of the Op-Ed Desk, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill., 60611.)

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**** filed by:KR-F(--) on 04/11/97 at 06:38EST ****

**** printed by:WHPR(SCOH) on 04/11/97 at 11:08EST ****

**THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF MEDIA AFFAIRS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 1997

Contact: 202/456-7150

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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.

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-30-30-30-

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.

-30-30-30-

(UPI Focus)

Lawmakers lobby for fetus brain

WASHINGTON, April 9 (UPI) A mostly Republican group of lawmakers urged President Clinton, during his upcoming White House conference on childhood development and the brain, to devote at least one-third of the program to studying the development of the brains of fetuses.

In a letter to Clinton, the lawmakers said: ``Brain development in children does not begin at birth, but is part of a continuum that originates at conception.''

The president and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton planned to host the conference on April 17, promising to spotlight research discoveries about how the young develop and their implications for parents and policymakers.

Planned participants included a host of doctors and researchers with expertise in various aspects of childhood development, as well as representatives of community groups, police, and the entertainment industry.

The lawmakers, including House Speaker Newt Gingrich and House Republican leader Dick Armey, said Wednesday they sent a letter to Clinton suggesting the names of additional experts concerned with brain development prior to birth.

They urged Clinton to instruct the panel he assembles at the daylong conference next week to ``devote at least at third of its time, talents and resources to brain development in the preborn child.''

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**** filed by:UPI-(us) on 04/09/97 at 17:39EST ****

**** printed by:WHPR(SCOH) on 04/10/97 at 10:37EST ****