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Championing the improvement of early learning opportunities for every child

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eNewsletter - July 16, 2008

"Quality education starts with quality early learning for all children."

-Ron Stowe, National Director for America's Edge

news and alerts

- **Let's Talk!** *Talking to your child is the single most important action parents can take to help their child's early language development.* Literacy begins with the very first words a parent whispers to a newborn and continues with the hundreds of other ways parents communicate and interact with their children each day. But, while every parent is their child's first and most important teacher, many families do not have the information, skills or confidence needed to provide the early literacy experiences that will help their children become confident readers and writers by the end of third grade, which is when most children are expected to have these skills. Thrive by Five's [Culture of Literacy](#) Taskforce recently met with national experts – Dr. David Dickinson (Vanderbilt University), Dr. Colleen Huebner (University of Washington), and Dr. Julie A. Washington (University of Wisconsin-Madison) – to talk about the latest early literacy research and program trends and ways to reach families with information about the programs and supports that are available.



Number of words heard by a typical 4-year-old...

- From a professional family: 45 million
- From a working class family: 26 million
- Living in poverty: only 13 million*

*This difference can be critical when it is time for low-income children to learn to read, since the more frequently a child has heard a word, the better s/he can decode and understand it. (*SOURCE: Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, [Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children](#), Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, 1996.)*

» More Resources:

[Baby talk: 8 easy and fun ways to improve your baby's language skills](#); and [Winning Ways to Talk with Young Children](#), a publication from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

- **"No Child Starts Behind."** That's how we should approach K-12 education, said Thrive by Five board member Bob Watt, revising the federal government's "No Child Left Behind" slogan while recently moderating a luncheon to benefit [America's Edge](#). The event, hosted by [United Ways of Washington](#), focused on sustaining America's competitive edge through quality education. And quality education starts with quality early learning for all children, said Ron Stowe, the National Director for America's Edge, a national non-profit organization engaging business leaders more extensively in support of efforts to improve the quality of public education. Stowe talked about the importance of early learning and how businesses can benefit and help champion the cause.
- **Partnering = Success!** Promoting the healthy development and school readiness of children from birth to age 5 is an important strategy to prevent achievement gaps in later years. The contribution of public-private partnerships, such as Thrive

by Five Washington, to developing successful supports for young children and families is growing, according to a recently released report from the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices. The report, [Partnering with the Private and Philanthropic Sectors: A Governor's Guide to Investing in Early Childhood](#), provides a roadmap for governors to leverage the resources and expertise of the private and philanthropic sectors in furthering early childhood programs and services in their states. By highlighting successful early childhood public-private partnerships from 11 states, including Washington, the report helps governors, state policymakers and leaders in the private sector community understand the steps necessary in forming a valuable and effective partnership.

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what you can do

There are a lot of hot issues to consider when voting this year – national defense, health care, the economy, the environment, but **make sure candidates know that your vote is also about children and families.** [Every Child Matters](#), a national non-profit, non-partisan organization is dedicated to making children, youth and families a national political priority.

- Ask candidates about their positions on key issues facing children and families. Order a [toolkit](#) from Every Child Matters or simply ask these five questions of candidates you meet:
 1. More than 8 million children have no health insurance in the U.S. **How do you propose to ensure that children grow up healthy and have access to comprehensive health care?**
 2. 3.5 million children nationwide were reported abused and neglected in 2005. **What are your plans to keep all children safe from violence in their homes, schools and communities?**
 3. Millions of children are left alone every day after school. **What is your position on how to keep children safe and supervised in the late afternoon and early evening hours?**
 4. Millions of children lack access to early learning opportunities. **What is your position on early learning and care, including preparing children for kindergarten?**
 5. 13.6 million of America's children live in poverty. **What would you do to help families with children become economically self-sufficient and able to provide for their family's needs?**

(Questions from Every Child Matters' "Ask the Candidate" card)

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partner resources

What to Look for When Choosing a Childcare Facility: Deciding who will watch their child while they're at work is one of the hardest decisions parents make. In a KING 5 TV [news story](#), Nina Auerbach, CEO of King County Child Care Resources, provides a "Top 5" list of things every parent should look for when choosing child care.

Become a Certified Child Care Specialist or Paraprofessional: The [Washington State Early Care and Education Apprenticeship Program](#) combines classes and on-the-job training to produce certified child care specialists and paraprofessionals. For more information about the Washington State Early Care and Education Program, contact Lynda Sysko, Coordinator/Training Director at 253-444-7945 or by email lynda.sysko@cptc.edu.

Sustaining America's Competitive Edge Through Quality Education: America's Edge has released [The Mounting Crisis: A Call to Action](#). This report is a guide for what businesses and business leaders can do to help sustain America's competitive edge through quality education.

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events and activities

August 13: King County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's Monthly Breakfast | Seattle, WA

Dr. Graciela Italiano-Thomas, Thrive by Five's President and CEO, will speak about early learning issues and how Washington is

"Helping All Children Thrive by Five" at the Monthly Meet and Greet Networking Breakfast hosted by the Washington State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The event will be held from 7-9 a.m. at the Washington Athletic Club. Register [online](#) or call 206-829-8895.

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