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Championing the improvement of early learning opportunities for every child

[News and Alerts](#)  
[What You Can Do](#)  
[Partner Resources](#)  
[Events and Activities](#)  
[Visit Our Web Site](#)

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## eNewsletter

### June 12, 2008

## news and alerts

- **Born Learning Washington's Nurturing Children's Creativity Campaign shows the power of play and artistic expression in children's learning.** More than 700 pieces of professionally framed children's artwork and photographs of babies, toddlers and preschoolers creating art are currently being exhibited to the public by the six [Born Learning Washington communities](#) participating in the Nurturing Children's Creativity campaign. Clark County's local campaign exhibit recently received TV coverage by Northwest NewsChannel 8: [watch the live footage and read about it here](#). (PHOTO: Child from a Clark County child care center works on his art.)



- **New Zealand model of early childhood assessment one of many being considered by Washington's Early Learning Community.** This month, Thrive by Five will host a breakfast roundtable discussion with the [Educational Leadership Project](#) of New Zealand to discuss "Learning Stories," their country's approach to assessing young children's learning. "Learning Stories" involves documenting learning through written or computer-generated narratives, photographs, video and examples of children's work. ([Learn more about Learning Stories](#).) These kinds of conversations are instrumental as Washington considers a kindergarten assessment and transition process-one that will provide teachers, parents and our State as a whole a more meaningful way to understand what young children are learning and a clearer picture of early learning programs' effectiveness in meeting children's needs.
- **Investments in early learning pay huge dividends for children and families ... and society as a whole.** Experts estimate an **economic return of between \$4 and \$17 for every dollar invested** in high-quality early learning programs. By *increasing* the likelihood that children will be literate, employed and enrolled in postsecondary education, we *decrease* the likelihood that they will be school dropouts, dependent on welfare or arrested for criminal activity. At a recent luncheon sponsored by the United Way of King County, one of America's foremost experts on the economic impact of early learning, Rob Grunewald, spoke about assessing such returns on investing in early childhood development programs. Mr. Grunewald, an associate economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, was interviewed onstage by Trilogy Partners' John Stanton, who is also chairman of the Business Partnership for Early Learning (BPEL) and a Thrive by Five board member. Their dialogue centered around the elements that, together, add up to a promising early childhood, especially for children beginning life with social and economic obstacles. Thrive by Five, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, BPEL and CityClub helped sponsor the event. [Read articles from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis about early childhood development](#).
- **At the heart of quality child care centers are quality early learning professionals.** Thrive by Five's CEO Dr. Graciela Italiano-Thomas recently spoke to several hundred students in [Green River Community College's Early Childhood Education Program](#) about some of the Workforce Development efforts happening in our state. Thrive by Five has been working with the [Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network](#) on aligned funding that would...
  - Support about 250-275 annual scholarships for early learning professionals to access credit-bearing coursework at colleges and universities to increase their education levels
  - Support the state's 11 resource and referral offices as they go through the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies accreditation process to ensure that the support they provide local professionals is of the highest quality
  - Create an Early Childhood Academy that supports quality community-based training through the Research & Referral Network.

In some of our state's community colleges, like Green River, promising and experienced early learning professionals who do not speak English can access I-BEST or Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training. I-BEST pairs English as a second language and adult basic education instructors with professional-technical instructors in the classroom to provide students

with literacy education and workforce skills at the same time.

[more](#)

[Back to top](#)

## what you can do

Join [Docs for Tots](#) to help elevate the significance of early childhood in the public health agenda. According to a 2008 Docs for Tots research brief, "The brain development that occurs in the earliest years offers a critical window of opportunity to profoundly influence lifelong physical, mental and social health." [Share your comments and suggestions](#) as part of the collaborative process of building [Healthy People 2020](#), a chance to move toward expanded and proactive investments, practices and policies that support our youngest children and our nation's health. *To participate in this vital discussion, please click on the links above.*

[Back to top](#)

## partner resources

**Improve your ability to advocate for abused and neglected children:** [National CASA](#) (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children) has created a new series of training podcasts, featuring National CASA staff and other subject-matter experts. Click on the following links to hear Dr. Danielle Kassow from Thrive by Five discuss parent-child attachment theory [\[part one\]](#) and speak more broadly about child development [\[part 2\]](#), including: what children gain from adult interaction, the importance of language acquisition, and the adult's role in being a child's "emotion coach."

**Building Teachers' Skills to Nurture Early Language and Literacy Birth to Five:** *Cradling Literacy - Zero to Three's* interactive training conference (June 23-25 in Washington, DC) - prepares participants to work with teachers on their capacity to support early language and literacy development. It provides a holistic approach to the understanding of early language and literacy, cradling it in the context of early development, important care giving relationships and family culture. The [Cradling Literacy approach](#) helps caregivers deepen their understanding, knowledge and skills.

[Back to top](#)

## events and activities

**June 19: Cowlitz County Early Care and Learning Coalition Business Luncheon | Longview, WA**  
Thrive by Five President and CEO Dr. Graciela Italiano-Thomas will share with community business leaders the importance of investing in early learning and provide an overview of Washington state's efforts to improve early learning. Dr. Pam Schiller, a nationally recognized speaker and author on early brain research, child development and early education, also will present. (For more info, please contact Bob Johnson at Cowlitz County United Way: [bjohnson@cowlitzunitedway.org](mailto:bjohnson@cowlitzunitedway.org) or 360-423-5320.)

[Back to top](#)

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