

School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gaps

Providence, RI, March 8, 2006

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Breaking Down Barriers: CLASP Immigrant Families and Early Education Project

Facilitator: Deeana Jang, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy

Children of immigrants participate in early education programs at a lower rate than children whose parents are both U.S. born. The demographics and geographic concentrations of immigrant children are changing rapidly. This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the factors that influence immigrant family's choices about early education and access barriers that are often experienced by children in immigrant families.

Neighborhood Impacts on Readiness: Strategies for Closing the Gap

Facilitator: Charles Bruner, Executive Director, Child and Family Policy Center

This workshop will present neighborhood information for Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts and encourage participants to explore how to tailor strategies so that they truly embrace the reality that "place matters." There is a critical need to ensure that school readiness strategies address the unique characteristics of neighborhoods. Demographic information shows that low-income, minority and immigrant children tend to be concentrated in poor urban neighborhoods. Exemplary programs can combine early learning and community building strategies to more effectively meet the needs and provide opportunities for young children and their families.

Building Relationships with Parents and Family Child Care Providers

Facilitators: Joyce Butler, Director, Ready to Learn Providence and Tania Quezada, Coordinator of Community Learning; Carnell Jackie Jackson, Coordinator of Family Engagement; Nazly Guzman-Singletary, Assistant Director of AmeriCorps

Parents are their child's first teacher. In communities across the country, efforts are underway to build social networks in communities that support early learning. The most effective networks provide support for parents and caregivers, including family child care providers, while developing skills that support the social-emotional and literacy skills of young children. This workshop will provide examples of how Ready to Learn Providence has engaged families and community resources, such as libraries, family child care providers, and early care centers in order to provide early learning opportunities for young children and support their transition to kindergarten.

Ready or Not? The Role of Early Childhood Investments in K-12 Education Reform

Facilitator: Catherine B. Walsh, Deputy Director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

This workshop will be a facilitated discussion among participants about strategies to more effectively connect K-12 policy initiatives with early childhood policy initiatives. Investments in early childhood programs from birth through age 5 are critical to school success. Yet, across the country K-12 education reform and early childhood policy initiatives are often developing on parallel tracks and involve different stakeholder groups. Join your colleagues to discuss strategies to ensure that young children are part of local and state education reform efforts.