

BORN LEARNING – A NATIONAL LEARNING CAMPAIGN

Born Learning is a new national public engagement campaign, focused on creating early learning opportunities for young children. Public service advertising, a Web site and educational material gives parents and informal caregivers easy, “doable” action steps to help young children learn.

The fact is, it’s the simple things that make a difference in building a young child’s foundation for future success. It’s not flash cards or expensive educational toys – it’s making your grocery trip into a treasure hunt for colors and shapes, or turning laundry sorting into a silly song about body parts. On your next walk, narrating your child’s actions as if you were a sports announcer. Even dinner can become a learning opportunity, as your toddler builds math skills by counting eggs.

The *Born Learning* campaign shows how to turn everyday activities into opportunities to encourage learning. It’s built on the idea that while children are born learning, parents, grandparents and caregivers can encourage that learning in everyday moments.

Details of *Born Learning* Campaign

Born Learning was created by The United Way, Civitas and The Advertising Council. In 2005, it’s expected to include almost \$30 million of donated media – including TV, radio, newspaper, billboard, magazine and Web banner ads in English and Spanish – and \$7 million worth of parent materials.

Its Web site (<http://www.bornlearning.org>) is based on the latest research on early childhood development, and offers lots of educational tools for parents, grandparents and caregivers – including tips to encourage learning, answers to help care for young children; fact sheets on a child’s ages and stages; and checklists to simplify parenting. There is also a Spanish Web site, and much of the material is available in Spanish.

Research shows that parents and others need this kind of help. Almost half of America’s kindergarteners enter school unprepared, the U.S. Department of Education says – and low-income children are a year or more behind. Parents don’t always know what to do to encourage early learning, and don’t think they have time to do what it takes. In response to this need, *Born Learning* was designed to help parents and caregivers relax, have fun – and use everyday activities to create fun learning moments for young children.

But the campaign is equally focused on action. It seeks to create community change across America, helping communities and states generate school readiness and early learning support, policies, programs and budgets. In addition to awareness and education, *Born Learning* offers strategies and technical assistance to help communities galvanize support around early learning, providing a visible platform for opinion leader awareness of the issue along with public policy advocacy and community action.



About the *Born Learning* National Partners

Across the country, the system of 1,350 local United Ways and other community organizations are partnering to launch local *Born Learning* campaigns. Many are connecting local parents, grandparents and caregivers with local resources; providing research-based information to even more parents and caregivers; and building on the campaign to make long-term changes to help children come to school ready to succeed. Some 75% of local United Ways already support early learning, including supporting more than 350 Success By 6 coalitions, which are raising awareness, improving access to services and advocating for public policies to improve the lives of young children and families. <http://www.unitedway.org/sb6>

The Ad Council has been the nation's leading producer of PSAs since 1942. Ad Council PSAs have brought about real social change – such as seatbelt usage and reduction in drunk driving – and have raised Americans' awareness, inspired action and saved lives. The Ad Council is a private, nonprofit organization that marshals volunteer talent from the advertising and communications industries, the facilities of the media, and the resources of the business and nonprofit communities to deliver critical messages to the American public. The Ad Council produces, distributes and promotes thousands of public service campaigns. One of its primary focus areas is improving the quality of life for children. <http://www.adcouncil.org>

Civitas is a national nonprofit that creates innovative educational tools for parents, caregivers and professionals on the topic of early childhood development. Nationally known for its "Begin with Love" video and its Understanding Children book, Civitas has reached millions of adults caring for young children with its materials. Since 2002, Civitas worked with the City of Chicago to design and implement *Born Learning* as a public engagement and material distribution project for all parents and caregivers of children ages birth through five. Through this effort, Civitas developed more than 25 *Born Learning* tools that are designed to educate and inspire parents, caregivers and entire communities to take an active role in children's early learning. As a partner in this public engagement campaign, Civitas has adapted the Chicago *Born Learning* materials for distribution via the national campaign. <http://www.civitas.org>

Engaged too in the community mobilization components of the *Born Learning* campaign is Families and Work Institute. FWI is a non-partisan, national nonprofit research institute dedicated to providing data to inform decision-making on changing work-life, family life and community life. For the last decade, it has been translating what is known about how young children learn. FWI's *Mind in the Making* project on early learning is based on the best research on children's development and includes public awareness and public engagement activities. <http://www.familiesandwork.org/>