



**For Immediate Release
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**THE PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM
HOSTS LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST
ADDRESSING DEVASTATING EFFECTS
OF MASSACHUSETTS BUDGET CUTS
ON SCHOOL READINESS AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHANCELLOR JOHN SILBER SPEAKS

Boston, MA -- The Parent-Child Home Program, a proven, cost-effective school readiness program, today hosted its first legislative breakfast in the Great Hall of the State House for approximately 200 Massachusetts public officials, private funders and early childhood advocates. Boston University Chancellor and Acting President John Silber – a long-time proponent of the program and the original advocate for its expansion statewide – Rep. Peter Larkin, Sen. Steven Tolman, and Herbert Levine, Superintendent of the Salem Public Schools, were among many to speak about the long-term and demonstrable success of the program.

They and others including Salem parent Beth McCuish, Boston parent Alia Garcia, Home Visitor Susana Saldana-Sanchez and Site Coordinator Carol Rubin talked about the effects of Gov. Swift's veto of program funding last year and Gov. Romney's budget cuts, which will further decimate the program. Some sites have had to close and other staff were laid off, squandering the state's 3-year investment in program expansion.

“The inadequacies of our schools have many causes, but none is more serious than our failure to provide early childhood education,” said Chancellor Silber. “When we fail to educate the Commonwealth's youngest children, we shortchange them in the most formative period of their lives. The Parent-Child Home Program is the most cost-effective, proven initiative available today preparing at-risk children and their families for success in school.”

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The Parent-Child Home Program, founded and headquartered in New York, had enjoyed its greatest success in Massachusetts. The first Massachusetts sites opened in 1970 and, in 1999, with state funding, the program was expanded, providing thousands of families of 2- and 3-year-olds with intensive home visiting focused on developing the language and early literacy skills needed to enter school ready to learn.

“We are here today in hopes of working with legislators, the Department of Education and the Governor’s office to identify and develop funding streams to sustain this program in the state, to build on, rather than waste, the state’s multi-million dollar investment over the past three years which expanded the program to a total of 42 communities,” said Sarah Walzer, Executive Director of the Parent-Child Home Program. “If we, as a society, fail to prepare children to enter school ready to learn, we will find that we are regularly leaving children behind, and it is very difficult and much more costly to enable them to catch up once they have entered school.”

Research indicates that Parent-Child Home Program participants outperform students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds on school readiness measures and go on to graduate from high school at the same rates as middle-class students, a 20 percent higher rate than other low-income students.

“Studies continually demonstrate that the greatest indicators of the success of children in our schools are an adult who cares and an effective teacher,” Rep. Larkin said. “The Parent-Child Home Program prepares children to succeed in school by inviting parents to participate as partners in that success as both a parent and a teacher for their children.”

The Pittsfield, Massachusetts Parent-Child Home Program replication has won national awards and two program graduates have been designated national distinguished Title I graduates. A 1976-1996 study of the effects of the Pittsfield program found that 84 percent of the program participants graduated from high school, while only 54 percent of those in Pittsfield who did not receive the program completed high school.

“Recently one of our home visitors helped to identify early learning problems experienced by a 3-year-old boy. We helped to get that child specialized services before entering public school,” said Carol Rubin, who oversees Parent-Child Home Program sites serving six suburban Boston communities. “He is now entering kindergarten without the need for more costly special education services.”

New research published in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* about the South Carolina Parent-Child Home Program demonstrated that four successive years of first graders who had been in the pre-preschool Parent-Child Home Program were more likely to be prepared for school than their socio-economic peers and than all children in the state.

“The program is a cost effective and critical to the state’s efforts to ensure that ‘no child is left behind,’” said Walzer. “It has proven both in the state and around the country that it is effective not only at preparing children to enter school ready to learn but also at ensuring that those children experience long-term academic success and go on to graduate from high school.”

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