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**MASSACHUSETTS FUNDING RESTORED FOR
THE PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM
ENSURING SCHOOL READINESS AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

Port Washington, NY – After much debate and advocacy, funding for the Parent-Child Home Program -- a proven, cost-effective school readiness program focused on developing language and early literacy skills -- will be restored by the State of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Education has now issued a Request for Proposals to disseminate \$800,000 to those communities that had previously received funding to operate Parent-Child Home Program sites.

In March, 2003, the Parent-Child Home Program hosted its first legislative breakfast highlighting the impact and value of the program and the devastating effects of Gov. Swift's veto of Parent-Child Home Program funding last year and Gov. Romney's subsequent early childhood budget cuts. Many Massachusetts public officials, private funders and early childhood advocates attended including Boston University Chancellor and Acting President John Silber – a long-time proponent of the program who played a critical role in launching it statewide, Reps. Peter Larkin and Alice Wolf, State Senators Steven Tollman and Andrea Nuciforo, and Herbert Levine, Superintendent of Salem Public Schools. The first Massachusetts Parent-Child Home Program sites opened in 1970. Since 2000, the program had been providing over 1,200 Massachusetts families of 2- and 3-year-olds with intensive home visiting, but last year's budget cuts left many sites facing financial elimination. Some sites were forced to close and others had to reduce the number of families served and lay off staff, squandering the state's three-year investment in program expansion and training.

"In the long run, the Parent-Child Home Program does not cost the commonwealth money; it saves the commonwealth money," said Chancellor Silber. "If funding had not been restored by the Legislature, the citizens of Massachusetts would have had to pay a far greater price in social services and remedial education than would have been "saved" by cutting the budget of this program."

"The inadequacies of our schools have many causes, but none is more serious than our failure to provide early childhood education. I am pleased that the Legislature has restored this funding so that more Massachusetts children will be able to enter school prepared to succeed," he added.

The Parent-Child Home Program, founded and headquartered in New York, has enjoyed its greatest expansion in Massachusetts. The first Massachusetts sites opened in 1970 and, in 1999, with state funding, the program was expanded to serve 42 sites in 52 communities. Research demonstrates that 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, director of the Parent-Child Home Program in six greater Boston communities. “He is now entering kindergarten without the need for much more costly special education services.”

New research published in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* about the South Carolina Parent-Child Home Program demonstrates 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 first grade than their socio-economic peers and than all children in the state. A soon-to-be-published study by New York University supports similar findings.

“The program is a cost effective and critical to the state’s efforts to ensure that ‘no child is left behind,’” said Sarah Walzer, Executive Director of the Parent-Child Home Program national center. “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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