



For Immediate Release
March 19, 2004

Contact: Claudia Stepke
646.296.7351

**SECRETARY OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE
ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL FUNDING
FOR PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM
AT HEARING BEFORE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Harrisburg, PA – The Hon. Estelle Richman, Secretary of Pennsylvania’s Department of Public Welfare, yesterday announced a one-year commitment of an additional \$1 million for The Parent-Child Home Program bringing its allocation for 2004-2005 to a total of \$4 million. The Parent-Child Home Program is a highly effective school readiness program with 28 sites throughout the State. During a three-hour public hearing in the State Capitol, 11 representatives including Committee Chair George Kenney, Rep. Phyllis Mundy, Rep. Katie True and Rep. Steven Capelli heard testimony before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Health and Human Services Committee highlighting the Program’s successes in the state and urging the legislature to continue to fund The Parent-Child Home Program beyond June 2005 so that the program will be able to continue work with the over 1,200 families it currently serves and the many more who could benefit from the program.

The Parent-Child Home Program is a proven, cost-effective school readiness program focused on developing language and early literacy skills, which has been providing Pennsylvania families with 2- and 3-year-olds with intensive home visiting for two years.

“Pennsylvania can’t afford **NOT** to provide funding for this high-quality program,” said Rep. Steven Capelli. “This program will produce one of the highest returns on investment and is an essential component for our state’s economic success in the 21st century.”

The Parent-Child Home Program was founded and is headquartered in New York. 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 and common sense tell us that quality early childhood initiatives such as the Parent-Child Home Program make a major difference in children's success in school and later in life," said Rep. Mundy. "This kind of up-front investment in our young people makes sense."

A study 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 Administration’s support of this program is a strong step forward,” said Sarah Walzer, executive director, The Parent-Child Home Program’s National Center. “More specifics are needed, however, to ensure the program’s success which can only be realized through continued funding beyond 2005.”

Others in attendance at the hearing included: Dr. Mary Ann Rafter, director, Center for Educational and Program Evaluation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Becky Knickebein, assistant director, Center for Educational and Program Evaluation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Tracy Stoner, parent, Lancaster Family Center; Nancy Harrison, parent, Luzerne County West/Tunkhannock; Ann Marcinak, parent and home visitor, ARIN Intermediate Unit #28; Sue Evans, Parent-Child Home Program coordinator, Lycoming-Clinton; Margie Olszewski, Parent-Child Home Program coordinator, School District of the City of Erie/Erie Family Center and Judee Guth, director, family support, Cen-Clear Child Services, Clearfield County.

#