



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SIX VENTURE GRANTS AWARDED IN FIVE STATES

*Grant fund created to encourage bold new ideas in community planning
and business management relating to the child care industry*

RALEIGH, NC— Six venture planning grants for innovative projects that link child care and economic development were recently awarded by the Linking Economic Development and Child Care National Technical Assistance Project, a joint venture of Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center, the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance and Cornell University. Funding for these grants was made possible by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

“The child care industry makes an important contribution to regional economies,” said Mildred Warner, PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University “But until recently, economic developers, community planners and business leaders have not recognized its importance, nor have they used the principles of economic development to help strengthen the industry. That's what our project is all about.”

Applications for the venture grant program were solicited from all states, and were reviewed by a national panel that included experts in child care and economic development.

“The venture grant program is designed to encourage organizations to try out new ideas. We really wanted to encourage bold, new thinking,” said Gerry Cobb, Director of Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center. “In addition to the grants, we are providing technical assistance and bringing grantees and applicants together to share ideas and foster peer-to-peer learning.”

A primer on economic development policy and how it can be used to support the early care and education industry will be released at a technical assistance session planned for January, 2005. A copy of the primer can be found at <http://economicdevelopment.cce.cornell.edu>.

2004 Smart Start Technical Assistance Center Venture Grants

CALIFORNIA

Santa Cruz Community Ventures

LINCC, Aptos

Marcia Meyer, 831-212-8623

This project focuses on building links between child care and transportation policy. Grant funds will be used to plan and convene a Roundtable Discussion in the Spring of 2005 of approximately 20 leading thinkers—researchers and practitioners engaged in: transportation planning, policy development, and funding; economic development; and early childhood education—to develop strategies for building the connection between child care and transportation. Recommendations will be developed for use by planners and policy-makers across the nation.

CONNECTICUT

Meetinghouse Child Care Project

Aceloro Learning, New Haven

Henry Wilde, 617-470-0358

This project aims to craft a financing model to address a key market failure in child care services—providing high-quality care in a price-sensitive market. Aceloro will refine, market, and finance a business plan for Meetinghouse Child Care, an entity to deliver high quality, home-based infant and toddler care to high income families and utilize both the resulting profit and intellectual capital to support high quality child care for low income children. The project is designed to make high quality child care services available to low income families, while creating a market opportunity to better serve high-income, price insensitive parents of infants and toddlers.

NORTH CAROLINA

Creating a Comprehensive Budget Template and Child Care Industry Expenditure/Revenue Database

Work Family Resource Center, Winston-Salem

Katura Jackson, 336-761-5100

This project aims to strengthen child care business management and gather data on child care industry revenues and expenses. Davidson County will serve as a pilot. A user-friendly budget template and guide will be created. Industry-wide data will be gathered and analyzed.

Private Employer of Record (PEO) Project

Association of Early Childhood Professionals (AECF), Greensboro

Rosemarie Vardell, 336-230-0001

This project will explore the feasibility of establishing a new intermediary organization that will allow small child care businesses to reach some economies of scale. AECF will examine the viability of using a Private Employment Organization (PEO) to offer human resources and/or business management services to the Greensboro child care industry. The PEO would serve as an “employer of record” for multiple, small child care establishments.

VERMONT

Collaborating with Planning Organizations

Windham Child Care Association, Brattleboro

Ellen Pratt, 802-387-4512

This project aims to engage Vermont’s 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) in gathering local child care data. The RPC’s would work closely with the 12 Local Affiliates of *Building Bright Futures: Vermont’s Alliance for Children (BBF)*, the state’s fledgling early childhood service delivery system. The long-term goal of the project is to create partnerships and protocols to institutionalize the collection of data related to early care, health and education by the appropriate planning and evaluation bodies.

WASHINGTON

Seattle Economic Impact Project

Seattle Department of Human Services, Seattle

Billie Young, 206-386-1143

This project focuses on forging new partnerships among the City of Seattle child care division and key economic development policy and funding agencies. The goal is to identify existing economic and workforce development initiatives that might help the early care and education industry, explore new options, and develop a toolkit for policy makers and practitioners interested in linking child care to economic development.

Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center was established in 2000 in response to the ever-increasing number of requests for technical assistance from states, cities, counties, communities, organizations and others about North Carolina's Smart Start initiative. To respond to the thousands of requests, a national center was developed through grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Triad Foundation. Each year, experts from the National Technical Assistance Center assist states and cities develop and implement their own early childhood initiatives that meet the needs of their specific states and communities. For additional information on the Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center, visit <http://www.ncsmartstart.org/national/main.htm>.

Cornell University's Linking Economic Development and Child Care Research Project was launched in 2000 and currently receives funding from the Child Care Bureau (DHHS/ACYF) and the US Department of Agriculture Hatch Research Program. Mildred Warner, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning, serves as the Principal Investigator and Louise Stoney is the lead consultant. A team of economists from the Department of Applied Economics and Management also consult with the project. Resources and publications from the project are available at <http://economicdevelopment.cce.cornell.edu/>.

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