

**School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gaps  
Policymakers and Practitioners Conference  
Wednesday March 8, 2006**

at  
**Brown University Faculty Club ❖ One Magee Street ❖ Providence, RI**

- 8:30 – 9:15**      **Registration and Breakfast**
- 9:15 – 9:30**      **Welcome**  
❖ *Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT*  
❖ *Mayor David N. Cicilline, Providence*  
❖ *Stephanie McGencey, Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families*
- 9:30 – 9:40**      **Introductory Remarks**  
❖ *Commissioner Peter McWalters, Rhode Island Department of Education*
- 9:40 – 10:30**      **Keynote Address**  
*Dr. Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Columbia University*  
Introduction of keynote speaker by *Dr. Lewis P. Lipsitt,*  
*Brown University and Board Chair, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT*
- 10:30 – 11:00**      **Questions and Discussion**
- 11:00 – 11:15**      **Break**
- 11:15 – 12:00**      **The Time is Now – Implications for Action**  
Moderator: *Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT*  
Panelists:  
❖ *Dr. Cynthia Garcia Coll, Education Department, Brown University*  
❖ *Dr. Rosa Smith, Schott Foundation for Public Education*
- 12:00 – 12:30**      **Questions and Discussion**
- 12:30 – 1:30**      **Lunch**
- 1:30 – 2:45**      **Workshops**  
Four workshops focused on policy and practice implications of key areas of the *Journal* and implications for action in states and communities. Description of breakout sessions is attached.
- 3:00 – 3:30**      **Closing Speaker**  
*Dr. Donnie W. Evans, Superintendent of Public Schools*  
Introduction of closing speaker by *Dr. Ronald Seifer, Director, Center for Human Development at Brown University*
- 3:30 – 4:00**      **Participant Reflections on Action Steps**

Sponsored by the Princeton/Brookings Future of Children, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, the Center for Human Development at Brown University, the Education Research Section and the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families, and the Kauffman Foundation.

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## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

### **Breaking Down Barriers: CLASP Immigrant Families and Early Education Project**

***Facilitator: Deeana Jang, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy***

Children of immigrants participate in early education programs at a lower rate than children whose parents are both U.S. born. The demographics and geographic concentrations of immigrant children are changing rapidly. This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the factors that influence immigrant family's choices about early education and access barriers that are often experienced by children in immigrant families.

### **Ready or Not? The Role of Early Childhood Investments in K-12 Education Reform**

***Facilitator: Catherine B. Walsh, Deputy Director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT***

Investments in early childhood programs from birth through age 5 are critical to school success. Yet, across the country K-12 education reform and early childhood policy initiatives are often developing on parallel tracks and involve different stakeholder groups. This workshop will be a facilitated discussion among participants about strategies to more effectively connect K-12 policy initiatives with early childhood policy initiatives.

### **Neighborhood Impacts on Readiness: Strategies for Closing the Gap**

***Facilitators: Ruth Mayden, Director, Program for Families with Young Children, The Annie E. Casey Foundation***  
***Charles Bruner, Executive Director, Child and Family Policy Center***

There is a critical need to ensure that school readiness strategies address the unique characteristics of neighborhoods. Demographic information shows that low-income, minority and immigrant children tend to be concentrated in poor urban neighborhoods. Exemplary programs can combine early learning and community building strategies to more effectively meet the needs and provide opportunities for young children and their families. This workshop will present neighborhood information for Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts and encourage participants to explore how to tailor strategies so that they truly embrace the reality that "place matters."

### **Building Relationships with Parents and Family Child Care Providers**

***Facilitators: Joyce Butler, Director, Ready to Learn Providence and Tania Quezada, Coordinator of Community Learning; Carnell Jackie Jackson, Coordinator of Family Engagement; Nazly Guzman-Singeltary, Assistant Director of Americorps***

Parents are their child's first teacher. In communities across the country, efforts are underway to build social networks in communities that support early learning. The most effective networks provide support for parents and caregivers, including family child care providers while developing skills that support the social-emotional and literacy skills of young children. This workshop will provide examples of how Ready to Learn Providence has engaged families and community resources, such as libraries, family child care providers, early care centers in order to provide early learning opportunities for young children and support the transition to kindergarten.