

# Campaign Connections

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



A CDC Campaign to Raise Awareness of Childhood Development

March 2006

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## Happy Birthday!

Campaign Celebrates  
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to Consumers

**W**hat a year it has been for the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign! February marks the first anniversary of the campaign’s launch to parents and consumers across the country, and there are many accomplishments we can celebrate in this first year.

Let’s take a look at some of the major milestones:

- The campaign was featured in the media nationwide including NBC’s “Today Show” and ABC’s “Good Morning America”

in February and pro-bono placement of the campaign PSA on the NBC Astrovision screen located in New York City’s Times Square during the month of March.

- An interactive campaign website was created including downloadable materials, online ordering for resource kits, and other resources for parents and health care professionals.
- Celebrity mom Eva La Rue (formerly of ABC’s “All My Children” and currently seen on “CSI Miami”) became a campaign spokesperson in media outreach to parents.
- In February 2005, Drs. Gerberding and Cordero appeared on 22 television stations across the country to talk about the importance of tracking a child’s development and the resources and information available to parents through the campaign.
- In partnership with the New York Families of Autistic Children, the campaign held a Mother’s Day event at the New York Hall of Science with participation from the U.S. Surgeon General’s office, CDC, and Eva La Rue.
- Campaign representatives attended five major health care professional conferences including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, and American Academy of Physician Assistants.
- A campaign e-card and newsletter article was distributed to health care professional organizations nationwide, reaching an audience of more than 5 million health care professionals.
- During April’s Kit Distribution Week, campaign champions distributed nearly 2,000 outreach kits and 9,800 campaign flyers reaching 40 states and Puerto Rico. Champions also conducted outreach during September’s PSA Distribution Week, encouraging local media to air the campaign PSA. Great work, everyone!

## Campaign Update: What's Going On?

### **Campaign Reaches Out to Fathers**

Keep your heads held high, look to the skies and you might get a glimpse of the campaign message with your very own eyes. That's right! The campaign message will appear on the Goodyear Blimp during major sporting events this spring in an effort to reach fathers and other sports fans. Also, look for a campaign PSA to air on Fox Sports Network's "Best Damn Sports Show Period" this spring.

### **Eva La Rue Promotes Campaign in Media**

Eva La Rue's commitment to the campaign has paid off in media spots including placements in *Vida En El Valle*, *InStyle*, and *Life and Style* magazines. Additionally, the Eva La Rue e-card PSA outreach project garnered a total of 121 television stations that requested copies of the PSA. In the fall of 2005, an e-card featuring Eva



La Rue encouraging use of the campaign PSA was distributed to television stations across the country.

### **Grassroots Outreach Continues Reaching Local Communities**

Thanks to the dedication and determination of our campaign champions and partners, the campaign continues to reach out to communities with the messages of childhood development. Check out some recent successes:

- The YMCA included campaign information in its weekly fax nationwide. An article about the campaign ran in the February 2006 issue of YMCA's *Member News*. Each of the 2,500 YMCAs nationwide will receive three wall posters of this publication to display in their facility.
- The African American Medical Network ran the campaign PSA in the January 2006 issue of its DVD magazine, a digital news program distributed to members monthly.
- The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation will distribute campaign materials at its multi-city Black Health Empowerment Project and Tour.
- The Asia and Pacific Islander Health Forum added campaign information to five different listservs, reaching approximately 700 consumers. An article about the campaign also appeared in the Forum's November/

December 2005 *Celebrating Children* e-newsletter.

### **Health Care Professional Outreach Going Strong**

Since the last update, 36 more state chapters of health care professional organizations have committed to sharing campaign information with their members. To date, the campaign has conducted outreach to more than 140 state organizations with the campaign e-card, newsletter article, and web linking kit. Watch for more to come in 2006!

## Ingredients for a Successful Partnership

**B**uilding a network of resources is a critical component in a campaign like “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” One way to do that is by creating successful partnerships that benefit both parties while striving to achieve a common goal.

One unique example of this is the campaign’s successful partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). AAP has worked with the campaign to reach out to its 60,000 members and promote the available materials to help educate parents about early childhood development. Utilizing AAP’s network of chapters, health care professionals are now aware of the resources and information that are available to them through the campaign.

Take a look at some of the specific collaboration efforts:

- A “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” article was published in the April 2005 issue of AAP News (national AAP member magazine) and the October 2005 issue of AAP Chapter Connections (newsletter for chapter leadership).
- Twenty-two AAP chapters included campaign information in their newsletters and on their websites.
- Campaign materials were exhibited and distributed at

AAP’s 2004 and 2005 national conferences and were promoted by AAP during training sessions on early childhood development and autism.

- A special insert highlighting the campaign and developmental milestones will appear in the April 2006 issue of *AAP News*.
- Campaign information was featured in April 2005 on AAP’s website in “Parenting Corner,” a resource section for parents.

Using AAP’s partnership as a blueprint, the campaign is currently developing partnerships with other national organizations and grassroots groups in an effort to increase public awareness and support for childhood development. Watch for more successful partnership highlights to come in later issues!

## Research Highlights

### Moving the Needle

Research and evaluation are critical tools in measuring the success of campaign efforts. The results are in for the first year of “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” It’s clear that our efforts are making a difference for both parents and health care professionals. The results below show the current 2005 measurements and are compared to 2004’s baseline measurements, where appropriate. Check out these highlights:

- 43% of pediatricians and 27% of parents agree they are aware of the campaign.
- More pediatricians report that they regularly screen for developmental delays (93% in 2005 vs. 87% in 2004).
- One-third more parents know behavior that most suggests a developmental delay (50% in 2005 vs. 37% in 2004).
- 50% decrease in pediatricians who agreed they would tell a worried parent to “wait and see.”
- In 2005, more than half (56%) of pediatricians agreed that they have resources to educate parents about developmental milestones.
- Significant increase in physicians aware of the campaign believing that autism intervention is best if started early (58% in 2005 vs. 38% in 2004).

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

### **Barbara Becker-Cottrill, Ed.D. West Virginia Autism Training Center**



**A**s executive director of Marshall University's West Virginia Autism Training Center, Barbara

Becker-Cottrill has dedicated her professional life to children with autism. During her 15 years in this position, she and her team have worked to equip hundreds of families, educators, and other care providers with the education and training they need to help children with autism live up to their full potential. With a passion for outreach, Becker-Cottrill has incorporated the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign into nearly everything she touches.

Read Barbara's complete story at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/partners/Spotlight\\_BarbaraCottrill.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/partners/Spotlight_BarbaraCottrill.html).

### **Have an inspiring story to tell?**

If you or someone you know has an inspiring story to tell as a result of becoming involved in the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign, please send them to [actearly@cdc.gov](mailto:actearly@cdc.gov). We're always looking for success stories to share with partners and campaign champions throughout the country, and we want to hear from you!

## Kudos to You!

**T**hanks to you – our dedicated campaign partners and champions – we have increased awareness and education about childhood development across the country. You continue to play a vital role in educating parents, health care professionals and child care providers to ensure that today's children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Sincere thanks to you for your continued support!

Special thanks to:

- All our campaign champions that helped make PSA Distribution Week a success (PSA requests continue to roll in)
- Margaret Jordan of CARE Alliance for presenting the campaign champion presentation at the NAAR's New York lecture series in November

If you've been involved in your community, the campaign wants to know. Send an e-mail to [actearly@cdc.gov](mailto:actearly@cdc.gov) with your story.

## ON THE HORIZON: What's next?

### **April is Autism Awareness Month**

**T**he month of April is designated as National Autism Awareness Month, and we're already starting to plan the various activities that will highlight the campaign and help increase awareness among parents. We know that the support and involvement of champions and partners is essential for these efforts to be successful. So be sure to watch for upcoming announcements about campaign activities during April to learn how you can get involved.

### **Dixie® Collaborates With "Learn the Signs. Act Early."**

Georgia Pacific's Dixie® products division has partnered with the campaign to reach out to mothers through Mommycast, a weekly podcast/Internet radio program designed for and created by mothers. Celebrity spokesperson Eva La Rue will participate in the podcast, scheduled to air in March. Stay tuned for more information about how you can help promote this opportunity!

## What People are Saying

*“Sometimes in the trenches, it seems like a hopeless situation, and by teaching the importance of monitoring your child’s cognitive and social development, the ‘Learn the Signs. Act Early.’ campaign allows parents and doctors to work together to ensure each child reaches his or her full potential.”*

– Kate Curry, mother of child with autism

## Want to get involved?

If you are looking for ways to get more involved with the campaign, be sure to visit the Partner section of the website ([www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)) and check out our “How to Get Involved” page for ideas. You’ll find ideas and tools to help you reach out to your communities, friends, and family to help them learn the signs and act early.

## Contact Us

Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention  
“Learn the Signs. Act Early.”

Phone:  
1-800-CDC-INFO

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