



*PREPARING YOUNG CHILDREN
FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL*

HELP for Kids Receives Grant to Continue Efforts in Preparing Young Children for Success in School

HELP for Kids recently received a second grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, which will enable the program to impact even more families and early care and education programs in the area. HELP for Kids is a project of the Harris County Early Learning Council.

Collaborative for Children serves as the lead agency for project operations, fiscal agent, parent education, and action planning with participating child care programs. This federally funded project implements a multi-faceted approach to improve early learning for children in a limited geographic area encompassing Gulfton and parts of the Sharpstown and Braeburn subdivisions in Southwest Houston.

The goals of the program address:

- Enhancing early childhood literacy;
- Helping parents, caregivers, child care providers, and educators increase their capacity to facilitate the development of cognitive, language comprehension, expressive language, social-emotional, and motor skills and promote learning readiness in young children;
- Promoting effective parenting;
- Developing linkages among early learning programs within a community and between early learning programs and health care services for young children; and
- Improving the quality of early learning programs through professional development and training activities, increased compensation, and recruitment and retention incentives for early learning providers.

HELP for Kids recently partnered with HISD's Gabriela Mistral Center for Early Childhood Education to provide parenting workshops. Tremendous interest was

expressed by the parents in being meaningfully involved in their children's education. Almost 150 parents (representing nearly half of the student body) attended the orientation meetings at the school. The sessions were held in Spanish and English, both during the day and in the evening to accommodate the busy schedules of working parents. Parents expressed a need for parenting classes as well as for classes in English as a Second Language (ESL), GED, and computer literacy. In January 2006, HELP for Kids plans to host an all-day conference for the parents at Gabriela Mistral Center and other parents throughout the Gulfton area.

Project partners include the Child Development Center of the Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Institute, ChildBuilders, Children's Museum of Houston, CHRISTUS Southwest Community Health Center, Collaborative for Children, HISD, Neighborhood Centers Inc., and the Rice University Center for Education School Literacy and Culture Project.

Since the inception of the project, HELP for Kids has received positive feedback from the community, and here is one example. "We would like to thank you for the service offered to us through HELP for Kids. It has been a good relationship and one that has given us the additional opportunity to improve our teaching methods and increase our enthusiasm for new and innovative ideas for children."

For additional information about HELP for Kids, contact Eddie Elizondo by phone at 832-814-7648 or e-mail at eelizondo@collabforchildren.org.

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