

A Prescription for Playful Learning

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In preparation for our session, we are sending you a few materials to acquaint you with the current work of the Department of Early Education and Care and the Museums and Libraries Project within the Race to the Top Grant, the department and BCM are working on together.

Materials include:

Pdf: Brain Building messages

Word document: Museums and Libraries Project

The 2013 Legislative Report Executive Summary:

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/board-materials/20130215-fy13-annual-legis-rpt-exec-summary.pdf>

The links to the brochures on the Parent Page of the EEC website:

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/parent-and-family-support/>

Boston Children's Museum information on the power of play:

<http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/power-of-play>

While all public libraries are free, museums, for the most part, are not. As we consider ways to make access to museums and other cultural venues more affordable and available for families with young children in Boston and across the Commonwealth, below are two examples of similar programs that are currently available for families in Denver and New York. Please check out their websites. How can we make this happen here?

Denver- 5 by 5

The 5 By 5 Project provides Denver Head Start and Early Head Start children and their families with year-round access and educational opportunities at 15 of Denver's cultural venues at no cost. The goals of The 5 By 5 Project are to strengthen families and support school readiness by providing Denver's young children with at least 5 cultural experiences by the age of 5 to spark their imagination and learning

<http://www.denvergov.org/educationandchildren/EducationandChildren/EarlyChildhood/The5By5Project/tabid/438197/Default.aspx>

New York City- Cool Culture

Cool Culture helps over 50,000 income-eligible families access and enjoy 90 of NYC's world-class cultural institutions for free, providing children with experiences that improve literacy and learning: <http://coolculture.org/>



Build Young Minds and Massachusetts' Future

Science shows that early experiences build the foundation for a lifetime of learning, achievement and productive, responsible citizenship. Quality environments, enriching learning opportunities, a connected, supportive community, and positive interactions with knowledgeable adults actually help form the architecture of the developing brain. By advocating for the success of our youngest citizens, we're ensuring a more prosperous economic future for everyone in Massachusetts.

Whether you're a parent, educator, business leader or legislator, all of us have a stake in supporting Brain Building in Progress. Here are five ways that you can be a Brain Builder:

1) Make Any Moment A Brain Building Moment

Take a moment in a busy world to engage and interact with a child. Children's brains are built through back-and-forth interactions and meaningful conversations with caring adults. Create lasting connections that build a child's brain!

2) Look for Brain Building Zones

Physical environments provide a framework for children's learning and development. Seek out and support the rich network of children's museums, libraries and community centers existing throughout the Commonwealth. While Brain Building can happen anywhere, these especially stimulating environments play a critical role.

3) Build your knowledge. The more we know, the more we'll help children grow.

A knowledgeable community and well-qualified education workforce give children the support they need to succeed in school and life. The more that everyone understands the importance of Brain Building, the more prosperous Massachusetts' future will be.

4) Make the Connections that Build Young Brains

Brain Building is a community-wide commitment with a network of supports. Connect with your local resource centers, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grantee, go to brainbuildinginprogress.org or call 2-1-1 to learn more about resources in your area.

5) Lead So That Young Children Succeed

Effective leaders are needed to champion Brain Building. Show your commitment by sharing Brain Building information among your networks, taking leadership within your child care program, signing the Brain Building Pledge or advocating for investments that focus on young children. With so much at stake, now's the time to take action.

The Brain Building in Progress campaign is a public/private partnership of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and a growing community of early education and child care providers, academic researchers, business and government leaders and community organizations. For more information please visit www.brainbuildinginprogress.org

Museums/Libraries Project

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant

PRESS RELEASE - BOSTON – May 7, 2012 – The Patrick-Murray Administration’s Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and Boston Children’s Museum (BCM) recently announced a new partnership to expand the state’s network of resources for families and communities to support children’s learning. This initiative, part of the Commonwealth’s Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge plan, will equip local museums and libraries across the state with programming, curricula and other tools to increase the number of high quality and enriching experiences available to our youngest citizens.

Why is the Boston Children’s Museum (BCM) involved in this Early Learning Challenge Grant?

BCM exists to help children understand and enjoy the world in which they live. It is a private, non-profit, educational institution that is recognized internationally as a research and development center and pacesetter for children’s exhibitions, educational programs, and curriculum. Founded in 1913, BCM has a 40-member board of trustees (the governing and voting body) and a maximum 90-member board of overseers (the support body).

Research shows that early museum experiences lead to the development of lifelong habits of accessing cultural and arts resources. Children’s museums offer families positive, first museum experiences, thereby making them more likely to engage fully in the cultural life of a city or region. By partnering with BCM, EEC has taken a bold step to increasing intentional family engagement efforts and early learning opportunities for the children and families of the Commonwealth. We believe that our contributions to the field of early childhood education, family advocacy and family engagement put BCM in an ideal position to launch the Museums/Libraries Project.

What are the goals for the Museums/Libraries Project?

BCM is happy to have this opportunity to participate and work with new and old partners on this unique, statewide strategy. Our first goal is to create partnerships with museums and libraries and unite in a mission to align informal early learning and development opportunities in our cultural institutions with state standards and to create engaging programming for children and families around a few key topics. Secondly, we will collaborate with EEC, CFCE grantees, and ECRS’s to provide museum and library programming to all the families in the Commonwealth. In other words:

- Grow the percentage of families with young children visiting and participating in programs at museums and libraries.

- Develop, strengthen, and deepen museum's and library's ability to connect with hard-to-reach families in their communities.
- Align informal early learning and development opportunities in our cultural institutions with state early learning standards and STEM standards.

How will we accomplish this?

Participating Museums and Libraries will engage in information and resource sharing, training, event planning, and other activities to create family engagement events around 4 topic areas. These areas currently include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), Brain Building in Progress (child development and brain architecture), Kindergarten (school) readiness, and literacy.

Participating Museums and Libraries (partial list)

Cape Ann Museum
Sawyer Free Library
Museum of Science
Boston Public Library
Children's Museum of Greater Fall River
Ames Free Library
Heritage Museum and Gardens
Falmouth Public Library
Worcester Art Museum
Worcester Public Library
Springfield Museums and Library
The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book
Art
The Clapp Memorial Library
Berkshire Museum
The Berkshire Athenaeum
The Discovery Museums
Concord Free Public Library