

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES: March 24, 2009

DATE OF EVENT: Monday evening, March 30 and Tuesday, March 31, 2009

CONTACT: Phil Sparks 202-326-8700 or cell: 202-716-8959

**First National Forum: *Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools*
Will Focus on Building Policy on State and Community Successes**

Sponsors include the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), Education Commission of the States (ECS), Voices for America's Children, the Children's Leadership Council and select members of the Learning First Alliance.

WASHINGTON, DC – The first ever national forum on *Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools* will draw more than 200 community leaders, education and early learning experts and other policymakers from 35 states.

They include Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, U.S. Department of Education (invited); Sterling Speirn, president of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Ellen Galinsky, co-founder of the Families and Work Institute; David Lawrence, president of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and retired newspaper executive in Miami, FL; William Raspberry, Pulitzer Prize winner and founder of BabySteps in Okolona, MS; Barbara Bowman, Chicago Public Schools; Sharon Lynn Kagan, Columbia University; among others.

WHERE/ **Monday, March 30, 6 pm: Reception; 7 pm: Program**
WHEN: Cannon Caucus Room, Cannon House Office Building
First Street and Independence Avenue SE

Tuesday, March 31, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm: National Forum
National Press Club Ballroom - 529 14th Street, NW, 13th floor

WHAT: National Forum: *Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools:*
Building Policy on State and Community Successes.

The WKKF and ECS will release a report, *Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools: Building Policy on State and Community Successes* (embargoed copies of the report will be available at www.ecs.org on Thursday, March 26).

On Monday evening, March 30, Ellen Galinsky, president of the Families and Work Institute, will release a preview of *Mind in the Making*, a multimedia project on the science of brain development as related to early learning that includes a new television series, videos for families and learning modules for early childhood teachers.

WHY: In the past few weeks Congress and President Obama have approved billions of dollars in new federal funding for early care and education activities across the country. The Obama administration has also outlined major K-12 public school reform measures. The challenge for national, state and local policymakers is that the two systems of early care education and K-12 schools are seldom aligned. Many young children and their parents are not aware of the difficulties they face moving from early learning programs to early grades. Elementary schools often have little dialogue with early care providers in their school districts.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that about 4 million children enter kindergarten or the first grade each year ([click here for a state-by-state listing](#)). Too many young children are not ready for school and the elementary schools are often not ready for them.

Among the more than 200 invited participants from 35 states are advocates, experts, and government officials from **Arizona, Connecticut, Mississippi, Ohio** and **Pennsylvania** who took part in a series of 2008 Governors' Forums on transition and alignment issues; W.K. Kellogg grantees from eight locations (**D.C., Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina** and **Ohio**) who were part of a multi-year [SPARK initiative](#) called Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids; and representatives of innovative community programs in **San Antonio, TX; Canton, OH; Miami, FL; and Hilo, HI**. [Click here for a draft agenda](#).

For further information, to schedule individual interviews with forum participants and to RSVP, contact Phil Sparks at 202-326-8700 or cell: 202-716-8959 or via psparks@ccmc.org.

###