

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Whitman Names Early Childhood Education Committee First Order of Business - Pre-School Teacher Standards**

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman today named members to her Early Childhood Advisory Committee and directed the committee to make as its first order of business the development of recommendations for credentials, training and experience to be required of early childhood educators in the Abbott districts.

"There is no consensus on the level of training, experience or qualification a pre-school educator should possess. However, there isn't a parent or taxpayer in the state that would argue against ensuring that pre-school educators have every bit of education and experience they need to prepare our young children for their school years," the Governor said.

"The State of New Jersey is poised to spend nearly \$300 million on pre-school education programs in 28 school districts. This is an unprecedented, enormous and absolutely appropriate investment in our children's education. I want the committee to make recommendations so we can ensure that this money is spent on qualified educators and other professionals," Gov. Whitman said.

"The committee's most fundamental purpose will be to help us create a national model of excellence in early childhood education. In addition to advising us on standards for early childhood educators, the committee will make recommendations on how to expand the number of accredited early childhood education centers and on other means to ensure that Early Childhood Program Aid is spent exclusively on programs of the highest quality," she added.

Gov. Whitman promised to create the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee in January. The committee will be chaired by Ciro Scalera, the executive director of the Association for Children of New Jersey. Committee members include a wide array of New Jerseyans including representatives from urban education, childhood education, the child care community, child advocacy, faith-based community providers, academic experts and others .

A list of committee members is attached.

#### **Early Childhood Education Committee Members**

Ciro Scalera, Chairman - Association for Children of NJ, Executive Director

Rev. Reginald Jackson - Black Ministers' Council

Barbara Reisman - The Schumann Fund, Executive Director

Deborah Stahl - Lucent Technologies Foundation, Manager

Chris Kjeldsen - Johnson & Johnson, Vice President of Community &

Workplace

Lorraine Johnson - Head Start Association, President

Bev Ranton - Camden Resource and Referral Agency, Director

Dr. James Lytle - Trenton Schools Superintendent

Linda Dold-Collins - Pleasantville Bd. of Ed., Director, early Childhood Programs

Ed Green - Council for Early Childhood Professional Education

Carolann Besler - NJ Care Association, President

Tom Zsiga - Child Care Association, President

Dr. Beverly Hall - Newark Superintendent

Daniel Santo-Pietro - Hispanic Directors' Association

Gabriella E. Morris - The Prudential Foundation, President

Leo Klagholz - Commissioner, Dept. of Education

Michelle Guhl - Commissioner, Dept. of Human Services

Rev. Buster Soaries - Secretary of State

Eileen McGinnis - Governor's Chief of Policy