



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Whitman Launches \$100 Million Comprehensive Early Child Care and Education Initiative

Governor Christie Whitman was joined today by actor and film director Rob Reiner in announcing a \$100 million initiative to ensure that every child in New Jersey under the age of six and his or her family has access to the early childhood services that are critical to a child's health and development.

"This program builds on my vision of a New Jersey we are proud to call home, a New Jersey where families feel safe, where jobs are plentiful, where opportunities abound," said Whitman in announcing the community-based Family and Children Early Education Services program, or FACES. "I want to build that New Jersey because as a mother I believe that every child ought to be able to look forward to a healthy and productive future."

FACES is a public-private partnership to promote four core early child care and education services, including quality child care, prenatal and health services, parental education and literacy.

Participants include the Newcomb Hospital's Women's and Children's Center, Summit Bank, CoreStates Bank, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital, the state departments of Human Services, Education, and Health and Senior Services, Rob Reiner's Reiner Foundation, and the cities of Trenton and Vineland, where the Governor announced today that the initial two pilot Family Resource Centers will be located.

The Governor was also joined today by school superintendents from the following seven districts, who have agreed to support the FACES program: Belmar Superintendent Dr. Lester Richens, Keansburg Borough Superintendent Barbara Trzeskowski, Millville City Superintendent Dr. Larry Miller, Passaic City Superintendent Robert Holster, Hillside Superintendent Dr. Hiroko Miyakawa, Irvington Township Superintendent Peter Carter and Jersey City Superintendent Dr. Richard DiPatri, represented by Dr. Grisel Lopez-Diaz.

FACES focuses on four core services:

- Quality Child Care - professional development, dissemination of an instructional services directory for organizations with early childhood programs, assistance with national accreditation and other initiatives designed to promote quality local partnerships;
- Prenatal and Health Services - referral to clinical visits including immunization and health assessment for mothers and children, home visitation, parenting skills for newborn care, and family counseling;
- Parental Education - child health and safety practices, time and money management, disciplinary techniques, and child care selection and utilization;
- Literacy - programs focused on literary education for parents, children, and those who teach job related skills to parents.

The program promotes the availability of these key services for New Jersey's children by:

- making available \$10 million in matching grants annually to school districts over five years to provide \$100 million for comprehensive early childhood education programs which include the core services;
- offering \$200,000 in grants to planning efforts by private and public organizations to assess their county's needs, and integrate and expand their services for children;
- establishing Family Resource Centers to provide referral and on-site prenatal and health services, as well as support services for parents.

In addition to Family Resource Centers, FACE's core services can also be delivered through teen parenting programs; preschool, early childhood programs or other local, county or state-sponsored programs.

"Once in place, these components will work together with programs like Bright Beginnings, KidCare and other initiatives we've taken to offer New Jersey's children the best start in life they can get," Whitman said.

Bright Beginnings is an \$8.5 million program announced by Whitman in April to improve child care services in New Jersey. In September, the Governor announced the New Jersey KidCare initiative, which in its first phase will provide \$136 million to extend health insurance coverage to over 100,000 New Jersey children. Also in September, the Governor announced a program to help turn schools into family-friendly centers to help working parents by giving their children a safe, constructive place to go after the regular school day ends.

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