

## Boston Parents Call for Change at Summit

As we go to press, final plans are being made for the May Boston Community Education Summit. On Monday, May 22, Boston parents and community members will convene the 10th Community Education Summit. Held at the Charles Street AME Church, 551 Warren St. in Roxbury, this Summit marks the second anniversary of this effort led by the Black Ministerial Alliance. The Summits are an opportunity for parents and community members to discuss educational issues directly with Superintendent Thomas Payzant and other Boston Public School (BPS) staff. Over the years, attendance at the Summits has ranged from between 75 and 400 participants.

Parents' PLACE partners Fran Smith and John Mudd from Mass. Advocacy Center are working with the Black Ministerial Alliance and others to organize these bi-monthly forums.

At the May Summit, Klare Shaw and Rick Johnson, BPS parents, will present "Summary Recommendations" gathered at Summits over the past two years. The Recommendations address four broad areas:

- **Supports for Students**

Assure students of such basics as textbooks, seats to sit in, and smaller classes; teachers trained and resources in place to prepare them to pass the MCAS;



coordination of community-based resources; a plan and safety nets in place for students who may fail to pass MCAS in 2003 and for those who are at risk for being retained in grades 3, 6, and 9; and guidance in defining post high-school goals.

- **Parent Involvement**

Develop clear BPS policies and staff development on parent involvement; notify parents that the school system is seriously committed to parent involvement in the schools and in School Site Councils; and hold staff accountable for implementing parent participation policies.

- **Hiring, Training, and Accountability**

Use flexibility and parent input in hiring; strengthen professional development for teachers; improve cultural sensitivity; increase representation of people of color among teachers and administrators; hold teachers and

administrators accountable for student achievement; involve parents in contract negotiation process.

- **Testing Requirements**

Use multiple assessments to measure student achievement, as called for in the state education reform legislation; defer MCAS requirement for graduation until students have had the chance to go K-12 grades under the new standards; ensure teacher qualifications; close achievement gap between African American and Latino students and others; use MCAS to measure school effectiveness, not students.

In the next *Bulletin*, we will report on the Superintendent's response to these Recommendations, including policy initiatives, commitments, and next steps. In the meantime, readers interested in the Boston Summits should call either Angel Simpson, Black Ministerial Alliance Education Action Coordinator, at 617-445-2156 or Fran Smith 617-357-8431, x 227.

In future years, Parents' PLACE, in partnership with Mass. Advocacy Center, will be looking to support communities interested in similar opportunities for dialogue among parents, community members, and educational leaders about critical issues in education reform. Readers interested in sponsoring Community Education Summits in their own communities should call Janet Vohs at the Parents' PLACE Boston office, 617-236-7210, x133.

## Portuguese Outreach Update

The Portuguese Outreach at Parents' PLACE is up and running! In fact, in April, the Brazilian newspaper *A Noticia* featured Sandy Blanes, Parents' PLACE Coordinator for Portuguese-speaking families, in a full-page spread entitled "An American who is so Brazilian"! Sandy has been busy forming important partnerships with the Brazilian Consulate, with Portuguese-language media services, and with organizations serving Portuguese-speaking families. They are excit-

ed about Parents' PLACE and eager to spread the word and build on what we are doing. The Boston Brazilian Consulate, for example, has pledged enthusiastic support for our efforts to provide families with up-to-date parenting and education information in Portuguese.

The 1st Portuguese Health Conference, sponsored by the Mass. Department of Public Health (DPH), will be held in September, and

Parents' PLACE is actively involved on the planning committee. This conference, intended for professionals and service providers to the Portuguese-speaking community, will provide a background on cultural diversity that can help shape the DPH information gathering and database activities.

In other efforts to improve services for Portuguese-speaking families, Parents' PLACE is meeting monthly with the Portuguese-Speakers Providers' Network to exchange pertinent, up-to-date information

# Get to know what your kids need to know

With education reform efforts taking place throughout the state, Parents' PLACE staff think it's important for parents to become familiar with the education standards set in Massachusetts. Called Curriculum Frameworks, these standards are currently available in mathematics, science & technology, English Language Arts, history and social sciences, and foreign languages. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) bases its tests on the Frameworks.

Here's an example from the **Mathematics Curriculum Framework**. It is in the area of geometry and measurement for children in PreK - Grade 4.

## PreK - Grade 4 Learning Standards

Students engage in problem solving, communicating, reasoning, and connecting to:

- Demonstrate the attributes of length, capacity, weight, area, volume, time, temperature, and angle.
- Use the process of measuring and the concepts related to units of measurement.

- Make and use estimates of measurement.
- Measure in everyday problem situations.

## Example of Student Learning

Working in small groups, students make boxes from pieces of paper and explore relationships. They have available to them a myriad of materials and manipulatives, including grid paper for graphing and cutting, cubes or beans or rice or candy bits, graduated cylinders, tape, and scissors. Students try to find the box with the largest volume and the smallest volume. Is this the same as the box that will hold the most or least number of cubes, beans, rice or candy? As they work with the materials, students explore different relationships as they convince others that their box holds the most.

To obtain a copy of the Curriculum Frameworks in Mathematics, Science & Technology, English Language Arts, History and Social Science, and Foreign Languages, call Mass. Department of Education (DOE) at 781-388-3300, visit the DOE website at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu), or visit Parents' PLACE website at [www.pplace.org](http://www.pplace.org).

## Portuguese Outreach Update, continued from page 1

and resources. Parents' PLACE is also part of a new multicultural network of professionals and organizations in the public and private sectors sharing resources and strategies. Called Community Partnership Resources Network (CPRN), this network aims to identify cross-cultural issues and build partnerships.

Meanwhile, Parents' PLACE workshop materials continue to be translated into Portuguese, and our list of resources for families continues to grow. Parents' PLACE now has educational and parenting materials in Portuguese ready to send out to families, schools, churches, clubs, and local gathering places.

For more information, to request a workshop, or to add your group, organization or family to our mailing list, just call, write, or email your request to [sblanes@fcsn.org](mailto:sblanes@fcsn.org).

We are most excited to announce that the Brazilian Consulate's office will be supplying the Parents' PLACE library with children's books in Portuguese. Our *Bulletins* and website [www.pplace.org](http://www.pplace.org) will continue to list titles of new books as they arrive. Families are invited to visit our library.

## Parents' PLACE Workshop Update

If you would like a workshop, let us know!

### Here's some of what we've been up to:

- "Helping Sibling Live Harmoniously, So You Can, Too!" at Salem Housing Authority - Tuesday, March 14
- "Education Reform Matters to All Students" and "Strategies for Successful Negotiation" at the Federation for Children with Special Needs' annual conference at the Boston World Trade Center - Saturday, March 18

### And some of what's ahead:

- "Behavior Management," for families who have children with Down syndrome, in Somerville - Thursday, June 1
- "Parents are Powerful," at the Berkshire Center for Families and Children, in Pittsfield - June 24

The following workshop topics are available through Parents' PLACE—contact TJ Hutson at 617-236-7210 ext. 113 for more details.

- Parents Are Powerful
- Education Reform

- Conflict Resolution
- To Go Or Not to Go: Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?
- Taking the Rush Out of Rush Hour: Tips for Building Reasonable and Sensible Nighttime Routines
- From Mild to Wild and Back Again: Parenting for Your Preschooler (ages 3-5)
- Things Kids do that Drive us Nuts: Understanding Motivation and Behavior
- Positive Approaches to Discipline: Alternatives That Work
- Self-Esteem: How Do Children Get It? How do Parents Give It?
- Temperamental Differences: Understanding and Accepting the Child That You Have
- Helping Children Maintain Friendships During the School-Age Years
- Bullying and Teasing: Dealing with Abusive Behavior
- Raising Sons and Daughters: Myths and Realities
- Gentle Parenting in a Violent Society: Raising Children in Our Troubled Times
- Helping Children Understand

## *If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again*

If I had my child to raise all over again, I'd do less correcting, and more connecting.

I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.

I would care to know less and know to care more.

I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.

I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.

I'd run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging, and less tugging.

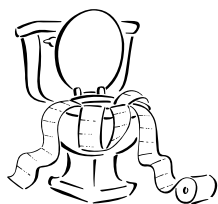
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.

I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.

I'd teach less about the love of power, and more about the power of love.

—Diana Loomans

\*Taken from *Parent Partners*, Davidson, NC



# The ABC's of Toilet Learning

Of all the milestones children accomplish, such as walking and talking, toileting seems to create the most struggle. When toileting is viewed simply as another learned skill, however, the approach can be more relaxed. One of the humbling truths parents must face is that while they can influence children's learning, children are in charge of what is learned—and when.

Understanding the difference between training and learning is critical. An effective method of helping children learn about toileting can be accomplished in three stages.

- A. Introduce toileting concepts in everyday activities.
- B. Watch for readiness signs.
- C. Let your child set the pace.

**A.** Introduce toileting concepts gradually and early, in playful and natural ways by using everyday routines. Read aloud—and let children read—books about toileting. Use a child-size toilet and a doll-size toilet. During diapering, label body parts and talk about what they do. When appropriate, allow opportunities to learn from peers.

**B.** As your child learns about toileting, watch closely for signs that she is ready to start trying things out. Follow your child's lead. Common readiness signs include staying dry for several hours, dressing and undressing themselves, awareness of wet/dirty diapers, physically being able to get on and off the toilet, using toilet words, asking questions, and interest in watching others use the toilet. Readiness signs show the child's growing interest. They do not mean that you should attempt to "train"

your child. Be ready for your child's interest to ebb and flow. Even a child who is fairly successful may take a break from learning this new skill and go back to diapers. The most important role you can play at this stage is to provide support without making demands.

**C.** Allow your child to set the pace of his learning. Trust that your child will eventually become independent and master toileting at his own pace. Some children may experiment for months before expressing interest in actually using the toilet. Others may sit on the toilet for months before they achieve success. Children learn to toilet independently only when each mental, physical, and emotional skill is mastered.

Toileting is a personal milestone for each child. By supporting, not directing, your child's toilet learning, they can experience the joy and satisfaction of learning.

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## Toileting Dos and Don'ts

Young children depend on parents and significant adults to support their learning and give them the tools they need to learn. With toilet learning, that means that you:

- Do actively engage children in practicing, reading about, watching, and talking about toileting.
- Do surround them with helpful tools—potty chair or stool to reach the toilet, books, training pants, extra clothes.
- Do make the bathroom area pleasant and friendly.
- Do allow plenty of time for learning and recognize that children learn from trying and making mistakes.
- Do be patient and trust in each child's competence.
- Don't bribe, demand, or force children to use the toilet.
- Don't set performance requirements. Young children are particularly sensitive to pressure. One of the most natural, yet frustrating, reactions to "pressure to perform" is that children become less competent.
- Do be understanding when a child has an accident. A sympathetic reaction helps reduce the performance anxiety that often accompanies toilet learning. Mistakes are bound to happen when learning a new skill.

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## Considerations for Children with Disabilities

Here are some questions that you and your child's team might want to consider if your child has a disability:

- Does the child have a way to communicate the need to go to the toilet?
- Can the child unfasten or unzip and pull down and pull up pants or panties? How can clothing be modified to make this easier?
- What adaptations can make it possible for the child to get on and off the toilet?
- How can independent handwashing be achieved?
- How can toileting experiences be consistent in each environment throughout the child's day?

Some children with disabilities will always need assistance to some degree, and others may just need a bit of extra time and help to become independent.

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# Parents' PLACE Library

## PARENTS' PLACE LIBRARY POLICY

On a trial basis, Parents' PLACE has adopted the following library lending policies. Parents' PLACE reserves the right to modify them as needed.

Parents may check out an item for a two-week period for no charge. To renew an item, call the office to make arrangements with our librarian. Parents' PLACE will ship the materials and will include a postage-paid return envelope.

All borrowers are responsible for any item(s) lost or damaged. Replacement costs are the actual cost of the item(s) to Parents' PLACE. A late charge of \$1.00 per day will be charged directly to borrowers for any item not returned on time.

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Disclaimer: It is the ultimate responsibility of the individual to research and gather information in order to make an informed decision. Products

## Parents' PLACE Resources

These U.S. Department of Education booklets are available free from Parents' PLACE!

*Helping Your Child Become a Reader*, January 2000  
*Helping Your Child Learn Math*, December 1994  
*Helping Your Child Learn History*, October 1996  
*Helping Your Child Learn Responsible Behavior*, September 1997  
*Getting Ready for College Early*, February 4, 1997  
*Parents Guide to the Internet*, November 1997  
 "Questions Parents Ask About Schools"

The full text of these publications is also available at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

### RECURSOS EN ESPAÑOL

*Los Padres Tienen Poder Revista Educativa*, Susan Lopez Mele y Brian Adams, Publicado por Center for Law and Education en 1996, 31 páginas

*Cómo Fortalecer el Futuro Académico de su Hijo Folleto Educativo*, Alianza para la Excelencia en la Educación, 12 páginas

*Cómo Ayudar a su Hijo a Aprender Ciencia Revista Educativa*, Nancy Paulu y Margaret Marti, Publicado por el Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos, Oficina de Investigación y Progreso Educativo en 1992, 57 páginas

### PUBLICAÇÕES EM PORTUGUÊS

*Como Obter Serviços de Educação para a Sua Criança em Massachusetts*, Folheto Educativo, Publicado por a Federação para Crianças com Necessidades Especiais

and services described herein are not endorsed by Parents' PLACE, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the U.S. Department of Education, or the Federal Government.

### NEW ARRIVALS:

1. *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*, by the National Research Council, 1999. 182 pages. Specific Recommendations from America's leading researchers on how to help children become successful readers.

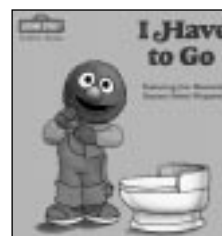
2. *First Feelings: Milestones in the Emotional Development of Your Baby and Child*, by Stanley Greenspan, MD, and Nancy Thorndike Greenspan, 1985. 247 pages. This book shows parents how to recognize the key stages of a child's emotional growth.

3. *Learn & Live*, by the George Lucas Foundation, 1997. Video plus 284-page companion book. Learn and Live shows masterful teachers and motivated students in schools in Chula Vista, CA; Seattle, WA; West Des Moines, IA; and Boston, MA. The book profiles hundreds of pioneering educational programs from around the country and tells the stories of teachers, parents, businesses, and communities who are creating new visions for public education.

WIC - Grátis - Alimentos Saudáveis e Informações Sobre Nutrição, Folheto Educativo, Publicado por o Departamento de Saúde Pública de Massachusetts - Programa de Nutrição para Mulheres, Bebés e Crianças

Envenenamento por Chumbo: Factos e Directrizes, Folheto Educativo, Publicado por o Departamento de Saúde Pública de Massachusetts - Programa Preventivo à Infância de Envenenamento por Chumbo

## Resources on Toilet Training



**I Have to Go**  
 By Anna Ross,  
 Norman Gorbaty  
 (Illustrator)  
 Little Grover can't stop to play as he hurries home; he has to go. His mommy

understands, and she accompanies him to the bathroom, where he goes all by himself. In accessible language and vivid pictures, each book in the Sesame Street Toddler Book series addresses a topic of importance to 2- to 4-year olds.



**What Do You Do With a Potty: An Important Pop-up Book**  
 By Marianne Borgardt &  
 Maxie Chambliss

A classic, this pop-up book is the perfect way to introduce potty-learning to your youngster.



**Look Who's Talking Too**  
 Video: VHS/PG-13

This follow-up to the 1989 hit *Look Who's Talking* finds Mikey, the talking baby, now a toddler just embarking on the adventure of toilet learning.



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