



@ a glance

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *early childhood @ a glance*. This newsletter will inform you about Comprehensive Health Education Foundation's (C.H.E.F.®) Early Childhood Initiative, current information, and health resources. C.H.E.F. wants to hear your thoughts and opinions, and what types of information and resources would be helpful to you. Please take a moment to fill out the response form located just after page 4.

C.H.E.F. selects early childhood as a top focus in 10-year strategic plan

In 1998, our Board of Directors approved a strategic plan to guide C.H.E.F. through the year 2008. The plan maintains a commitment to promoting health education for individuals, families, and communities, while providing focus for programs and efforts in three areas:

- Young children (prenatal to age 5) and their families
- School-aged children and their families
- Healthy aging

The type of strategies that C.H.E.F. will undertake to enhance and support health-promoting systems for young children and their families include:

- Promoting and supporting responsible parenting
- Enhancing the ability of child care providers and early childhood educators to create and sustain safe and health-promoting care for young children
- Mobilizing communities to adopt child- and family-friendly policies and practices

This newsletter and information about our initiatives can be found on our Web site at www.chef.org.



"We are excited to announce the first issue of 'early childhood @ a glance.' C.H.E.F. is committed to promoting, enhancing and supporting health education through the Early Childhood Initiative."

*— Larry Clark
President & C.E.O.*

The Importance of a Healthy Beginning – The Story of Four Children

An interview with Christine Vogel, parent

Christine Vogel and her husband have four drug-exposed children who came into their lives as DSHS foster/adoption placements. "We've had children with special needs for seven years and have had to gather the information and services that helped our children in bits and pieces," says Christine. She laments not having access to *Healthy Beginnings*[™] and BrainNet a long time ago. She can now credit them, along with the wisdom and teachings of Victoria Tennant, for some of the tools and understanding she has used to maximize her children's potential and enrich their lives.

One of the Vogels' children, born with fetal cocaine exposure, has thrived in a home environment of safety and security. He is an honors student able to navigate a mainstream classroom. "He requires no ongoing counseling, medication, or other interventions. He's a phenomenal child," marvels Christine. "He has good judgement and enjoys age-appropriate interactions with his peers."

The Vogels' youngest two children came to them at nearly two years old, having lived their earliest years in a neglectful, drug-addicted home. Their eating, communication, language, motor and comprehension skills were seriously impaired. Again, targeted interventions in speech, movement and brain stimulation;

a secure, nurturing home; and a rich preschool environment, brought these children off the developmentally delayed roles. "We found that Head Start dovetailed well with our approach," remembers Christine. Both children entered first grade as mainstreamed students.

Another adopted son, also drug-affected, spent his first three years, a time so critical to brain development, in eleven different homes. "Even with extensive professional intervention, special education, counseling, and medication, his prognosis for eventual independent living is uncertain," says Christine. But nobody is giving up. She believes in, and is grateful for, "the village that supports our family as we raise our at-risk children."

Christine's concerns extend beyond her own family. She is active in her community's "Brain Squad" to share what she has learned about the importance of early brain development. "I have found *Healthy Beginnings* and BrainNet[™] to be powerful tools. They help parents, teachers, childcare providers, foster parents, and others working with and advocating for children." She also credits them with creating advocacy tools for working with lawmakers and the courts.

Great video, especially for teen parents

"It Feels Good to Help Your Baby Learn," is a well-made video. It confirms how being a parent is a huge challenge and that the viewer has what it takes to care for his or her baby. The video emphasizes that a baby is born cable-ready and that parents must hook things up right. It demonstrates that touching, holding, talking to, reading to and playing with one's baby help establish important connections. (1998. 14 minutes.)

Contact: Joan Vitale, Voices for Illinois Children (312-456-0600). Cost: \$10.00.



Beginning in March 2001, Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.®) will be presenting our brand new program and facilitator trainings.

We developed *Healthy Beginnings*™ in response to a need for educational materials on early brain development for parents and early childhood caregivers and teachers. *Healthy Beginnings* describes “what’s going on” and “what to do” (prenatal to age 5) to nurture young children’s growing minds.

***Healthy Beginnings* addresses** brain development and developmental assets as they relate to these four main areas of growth:

- moving, sensing and exploring
- seeing, remembering and imagining
- listening, talking and understanding
- feeling and relating

The *Healthy Beginnings* Facilitator’s Training Program gives educators the tools they need to provide high quality training and consultation services. The program kit includes:

- Facilitator’s Guide
- Consultation Flip Book
- Journals
- Master Handouts
- Master Transparencies
- PowerPoint™ presentation on CD-ROM
- Magnets
- Water bottle



*Victoria Tennant, M.Ed.,
workshop trainer*

Workshop Trainer: Victoria Tennant, M.Ed.

Victoria is an independent consultant specializing in the practical application of brain/mind research. Since 1980 she has offered workshops and graduate level courses for parents, educators, and other professionals. With a background in early childhood education, Victoria emphasizes the importance of brain development in the first three years of a child’s life. She lives in Olympia and presents internationally. Victoria is coauthor of the *Healthy Beginnings* – nurturing young children’s growing minds program.

2001 *Healthy Beginnings*™ – nurturing young children’s growing minds Facilitator Trainings

Five great trainings are coming up! Each attendee will receive a *Healthy Beginnings* kit (\$250 value) if, in return, they agree to provide program effectiveness data as requested.

C.H.E.F.® and BrainNet™ are partnering to present the following three trainings. We encourage people working in diverse communities to apply; we will select 50 participants for each training from the applications submitted:

March 13: Mid-Columbia Library, Kennewick, WA

Contact: Elaine Ruhlman, 509-943-2614

E-mail: elainer@bfhd.wa.gov

March 20: C.H.E.F. offices, Seattle, WA

Contact: June Shigeno, 1-800-323-2433, ext. 175

E-mail: june-s@chef.org

April 25: Vancouver, WA

Contact: June Shigeno, 1-800-323-2433, ext. 175

E-mail: june-s@chef.org



Participants at the pilot training in Seattle doing cross-lateral exercises to improve attention, memory, and learning

C.H.E.F. is also partnering with two Washington State conferences to provide these two *Healthy Beginnings* pre-conference trainings.

May 2: C.H.E.F.® offices, Seattle, WA

Conference: Infant & Early Childhood Conference Pre-conference

Contact: Donna Doerer, 360-867-0944

E-mail: coordinator@waconferences.org

Registration: due April 20

May 7: Spokane, WA

Conference: Northwest Regional Parenting Training Pre-conference

Contact: Chris Eder, 509-335-2954

E-mail: ceeps@cahe.wsu.edu

Web site: parenting.wsu.edu

Registration: Space is limited, so first come, first served!



Maxine Hayes, Washington State Health Officer (left) and C.H.E.F. board member, and Sue Anderson, Early Childhood Initiative Program Director (right)



Healthy Beginnings kit (used in the pilot trainings)



Learn about C.H.E.F.'s new Grants Guidelines

C.H.E.F. is proud to announce revised grant guidelines. In the past, our grant gifts have been focused on general health education. Our future grants will be in line with populations targeted in our strategic plan: young children (prenatal to age 5) and their families, school-aged children and their families, and older adults. Grants focused on young children and their families will be given to projects that address one of the following three objectives:

- Promote and support responsible parenting
- Enhance the ability of child care and early childhood educators to provide safe and health-promoting care for young children
- Mobilize communities to adopt child- and family-friendly policies and practices

Another important change we have made is moving to two grant cycles per year with due dates of April 30 and September 30.

Our process, guidelines, frequently asked questions, and applications are available on our web site at www.chef.org/grants.htm. If you would like to receive a grant application packet, please call Sue Haughton at 206-824-2907.

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Let's Do Lunch!

Networking makes things happen, so please join us!

C.H.E.F. is partnering with WSU Cooperative Extension, WA Council on Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Family Support WA, and the WA Department of Health to sponsor two lunches for selected leaders in parent education and support. The events will bring together a diverse group of community leaders to learn more about each other's work. They will also help identify strategies to best meet organizational and professional client needs through networking, communicating and collaborating.

Dates: **Eastern Washington:**
Friday, September 14, 2001
Seattle, Washington:
Friday, October 19, 2001

Contact:
Sue Anderson at C.H.E.F.
1-800-323-2433, ext. 185
E-mail: suea@chef.org

Great Reading!

In the Spotlight—From Neurons to Neighborhoods

This profound book takes a comprehensive look at the developmental steps of young children. It is based on a project conducted by experts in such fields as neurobiology, behavioral and social sciences, education policy research, and human growth and development. Brain development is discussed as a rapidly changing process, influenced by every encounter a child experiences and the numerous environments children navigate.

National Research Council Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 2000.
(www.nap.edu; 1-888-624-8422)