



CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Mayor
Thomas M. Menino

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, November 12, 2008

For More Information Contact:
Press Office, 617-635-4461

Mayor Menino Declares Today “Talk, Read, Play” Day in the City of Boston

New public awareness campaign promotes parents as their children’s first teachers

Mayor Thomas M. Menino today joined representatives from the Boston Public School’s Countdown to Kindergarten program and ReadBoston to kick-off Talk, Read, Play, a new public awareness campaign focusing on the role of parents as their children’s first teachers from birth to age five. The campaign provides critical information and resources to support parents in educating their young children. The message is simple: each and every parent can be a great teacher for his or her child when they simply talk, read, and play with them. Key funding partners to the initiative include Staples, Bank of New York Mellon, and One Economy. Recognizing this innovative awareness campaign designed specifically for Boston parents, Mayor Menino declared Wednesday, November 12, 2008, Talk, Read, Play Day in the City of Boston.

“As parents, we have a responsibility to provide our children with enriching activities from a young age because their education begins at birth, not when they enter their first classroom,” Mayor Menino said. “The Talk, Read, Play campaign reminds parents of the simple steps that they can take to have a positive, early impact on their child’s education. These activities form the foundation for a child’s learning later in life.”

To raise awareness about the new initiative, sponsors of the campaign conducted a daylong visibility outreach effort. Volunteers wearing brightly colored Talk, Read, Play t-shirts helped to promote the program’s message throughout neighborhoods across the City. Additionally, information about the campaign was distributed to over 90 community partners, including childcare, healthcare, and dental centers, representing 741 individual providers. The visibility effort reached more than 7,500 children, parents, and caregivers in one day.

The launch event included the debut of a new Milestones Guide to help families better understand the “ages and stages” of a child’s growth. Divided into age ranges for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners, the guide, structured specifically for Boston parents, provides useful information to support healthy development and emphasizes the many local resources open to families with young children. All of the information contained in the Milestones Guide is available in electronic format in eight different languages at www.TalkReadPlay.org. The website also contains a constantly updated calendar listing with free opportunities for young families.

The campaign is a comprehensive reminder of the simple but sometimes overlooked steps that lead to a child's healthy development.

- **Talking** to a child from birth is one of the most important things that a parent can do to foster vocabulary, critical to the future development of reading and writing abilities.
- **Reading** with infants and toddlers helps them develop a longer attention span, a larger vocabulary, an eagerness to read, the ability to predict a storyline, and book-handling skills, all of which will help with learning to read later.
- **Playing** exposes children to essential social interactions that help to develop creativity, imagination, and problem-solving skills. This interaction also prepares them emotionally for the classroom setting.

To explore tips, resources, and fun, free activities for young families in Boston, visit www.TalkReadPlay.org.

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