



TOTS TALK

March 2008

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DOCS IN ACTION

Docs For Tots releases *Investing in Early Care and Education is a Powerful Public Health Initiative for New York's Children*. This is an exciting brief, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/DFTbriefNYFINAL2.pdf>, that highlights the health benefits and opportunities of early care and education. This brief reveals a new approach to making the case for quality Pre-K and was delivered to New York State elected officials by Docs For Tots and other advocates.

On February 27th, Docs For Tots visited Washington state legislators on Capitol Hill with **Reach Out and Read**, www.reachoutandread.org. The legislative visits highlighted the importance of early literacy and early intervention.

Docs For Tots participated in Pre-K Now's National Conference Call, *Unlikely Allies: Engaging New Partners in Pre-K*. Dr. Dina Lieser shared our successes and strategies in advocating for high quality Pre-K. Visit <http://preknow.org/advocate/confcalls/unlikelyallies.cfm> to listen to this call.

Docs For Tots weighed in on the **President's 2009 Budget**, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/2009BudgetThreatensChildren.doc>. The proposed cuts to Health, Head Start, Child Care and Early Education will hurt children and families.

Docs For Tots is concerned about high **preschool expulsion**, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/PreschoolExpulsion01.10.08.doc>, rates and urges policies to address program quality and mental health support.

Docs For Tots asked **Dr. Steve Barnett**, a network doc and active advocate in Texas, to tell us why he feels advocacy is important. Read Dr. Barnett's **Advocate Profile**, <http://www.docsfortots.org/resources/action/barnett.asp>.



GET INFORMED

Educational Resources about Early Childhood Issues

This month we are excited to share with you resources that inform **understanding state public policy** and the **science of early brain development**.

These resources will broaden your understanding of early childhood issues and the well-being of the whole child, including programs and policies not generally recognized as specifically related to physical health.

Understanding Your State’s Public Policy



Want to make the greatest impact on policies affecting babies, toddlers and their families? Read this two-page document prepared by **Zero To Three** that describes the resources available to help individuals understand how state and policy decisions are made. Includes several very useful links and resources. Click here to read, <http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/StatePolicyProcesses.pdf?docID=3461>.

The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture (Working Paper #5, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child)

The **National Scientific Council on the Developing Child’s** most recent working paper explores the science behind the core concepts of child development, and their implications for policy and practice. This paper presents scientific evidence indicating that for children to reach their full potential, communities need to support the families in providing a variety of stimulating experiences in the earliest years, when a child’s brain is optimally programmed to benefit from these experiences, and then build on this brain foundation through continued exposure to high quality, early learning experiences. Read the full document here, http://www.developingchild.net/pubs/wp/Timing_Quality_Early_Experiences.pdf.

TAKE ACTION!

MARCH FORTH FOR CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

Access to child care and Head Start is vital to the health, development, and school success of our children. Under the President’s proposed budget, 200,000 low-income children and their families would lose child care assistance and 14,000 children would lose Head Start. Docs For Tots, in partnership with the **National Women’s Law Center**, urges you to  or  your Senators and Representative to let them know that they must reject the President’s FY 2009 budget request for child care and Head Start and support more funding for these programs. Go to www.nwlc.org for detailed information.

For **opportunities** to take action in your state visit www.DocsForTots.org.



CLINICAL TOOLBOX

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Every year, thousands of families fail to claim tax credits that can help them pay for child care and other expenses. As a children's doctor, you are uniquely positioned to educate families about these valuable tax benefits. Docs For Tots encourages you to make information available to families you serve in your practice.

Visit <http://www.nwlc.org/details.cfm?id=3135§ion=tax> to find information and resources, including state-specific flyers and Spanish resources.

Contact Docs For Tots, dft@docsfortots.org, for more information.

M. e D. i a

Network doctor Michelle Terry's op-ed, *Supporting Healthy Social and Emotional Development in Young Children: A Unique Opportunity for Health Care Professionals*, <http://www.docsfortots.org/SupportinghealthysocialandemotionaldevelopmentofyoungchildrenM.Terry02.08.pdf.pdf> was published in the Northwest Bulletin.

Dr. Jill Sells' letter to the editor was published, recognizing the need to invest in Head Start: *State's preschool program offers high-quality experience*, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/Statespreschoolprogramoffershigh-qualityexperienceJSells02.11.08.pdf>.

Network doctor Rupin Thakkar's op-ed was published on Rx Privacy: *Give Doctors and Patients Privacy*, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/SeattlePIOp-EdRxPrivacyR.Thakkar02.07.08.pdf>. Listen to Dr. Thakkar on NPR, http://www.docsfortots.org/NPRs_Austin_Jenkins_on_Data-MiningR.Thakkar02.08.mp3.

Docs For Tots' letter to the editor about Pre-K funding was published in Newsday: *Kids Need Quality Pre-K*, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/PreKLTE01.09.08.pdf>.

Docs For Tots featured in *Miami Medicine*, <http://www.docsfortots.org/documents/MiamiMedicineMarch2008.pdf>, March 4, 2008.

ORGANIZATIONS, LET'S COLLABORATE!



Is your child advocacy organization interested in having doctor participation in its work? Children's doctors can be extraordinarily influential voices for children. Polling data indicate that physicians are particularly effective messengers for early childhood issues. Under this premise, Docs For Tots strives to help state and local child advocates in their efforts to improve child well-being by connecting organizations with doctors interested in advocacy work.

Docs For Tots accepts requests from child advocacy organizations looking for doctor involvement in promoting policies and practices that support the well-being of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Docs For Tots can assist both the doctor and organization by providing specific materials (PowerPoint presentations, talking points, etc.) as well as offering individualized technical assistance. Visit us on-line, www.DocsForTots.org, for more information.

Contact dft@docsfortots.org to discuss collaborative initiatives.

Tots Talk is an e-Newsletter of Docs For Tots, a nationwide network of doctors advocating for young children. This update, distributed to advocates nationwide, provides the latest in news and information including requests for doctor advocacy and examples of efforts to change the social policies affecting children's health and development.

Help Us Grow the Docs For Tots Network

Help us continue to grow the Docs For Tots network. Tell a friend about our activities, resources, and support! More doctors, more actions, better outcomes for kids!

Go to www.DocsForTots.org to Join Today!



A Nationwide Network of Doctors
Advocating for Young Children

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