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# Project EarlyWord

Project EarlyWord is a national, multicultural project dedicated to increase literacy by communicating the importance of early oral language development in very young children, to parents, families, and community leaders.



Project EarlyWord will reach its target audience through a public awareness campaign. The campaign will start in three pilot cities, targeting each of three specific populations of low socio-economic status: Hispanic, Black, and Anglo. When appropriate, the campaign will be presented in dual languages, with special attention paid to culturally-significant issues at all times.

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## Why?

“Studies of infants and young children show that learning doesn’t begin the day children enter school for the first time. Learning doesn’t begin in first grade, or in Kindergarten. Learning begins in the first months of life. And parents, or caretakers, are our children’s first teachers.” (Kuhl, 2001)

According to numerous reports and scientific studies throughout the field of education, children entering Kindergarten lack the necessary oral language and early literacy skills critical for learning. (Lyon) Those children with risk factors such as poverty, parents with limited education, single-parent homes or lack of experience with English are even less prepared.

Young children must be actively engaged in oral language in order to be prepared for learning. Because of this, the goal of Squared Literacy Initiatives’ first undertaking, Project EarlyWord, is to tell parents, families and community leaders that it is crucial to practice oral language with children. The campaign will reach its target audience through an awareness campaign using

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## How?

- **Grassroots community outreach** will involve the incorporation of our message into activities on the back of cereal boxes and children’s placemats at local restaurants. Pamphlets and posters will be placed in doctor’s offices and clinics, government and post offices, religious buildings, grocery stores, public transportation depots, barbershops, etc.
- **Public service announcements** will target audiences during the peak hours of the day via TV and radio.
- **Message placement** will be presented to the viewing audience through modeled behavior incorporated into the story lines of telenovelas (Spanish soap operas). This method will help

provide parents with working examples of how they can better communicate with their children in every day life.

- **Eye-catching billboards** along major highways and other high-traffic areas will target the everyday commuter, parents driving to and from work, and families traveling through town.
- **Print Media** will be placed in newspapers and magazines.
- **Mobile media** will complement billboards. Signs and posters will be displayed in buses, taxis, and transport company vehicles.
- **Parent Workshops** offered through collaborating organizations, daycare centers, churches, and schools will teach parents the importance of communicating with children at an early age and what steps are effective in teaching these objectives.

