

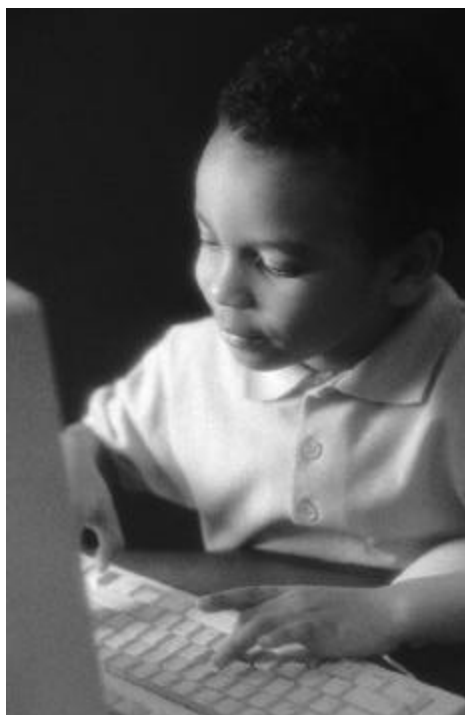
BUILDING A CADRE OF CHAMPIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Organization Description: The Council of Chief State School Officers is a nationwide, nonprofit organization composed of the public officials who lead the departments responsible for elementary and secondary education in the states, US-extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity. In representing the chief education officers, CCSSO works on behalf of the state agencies that serve pre-k-12 students throughout the nation.

Project Description: As part of the Pew Charitable Trusts early education initiative, "Starting Early, Starting Strong," CCSSO will educate and serve its membership to build support among the chiefs for expansion of high quality, universal preschool opportunities for 3 and 4 year-olds. As a primary activity of the project, CCSSO will enlist a cadre of champions from among its member superintendents and commissioners to oversee and advise the project and to serve as national, regional and state spokespersons for expanded quality and access to early childhood education. Activities include:

- *Empowering state leadership*--Early childhood education will be a key focus of its entire membership each time the Council convenes. Accordingly, the Council will organize a set of expert sessions and peer roundtables on early education at the three CCSSO national membership meetings in 2003.

- *Building a cadre of champions*--CCSSO will enlist a group of chief state school officers with strong records of support and action for early education to serve as spokespersons among its membership and to participate and present at major national conferences of key stakeholders in order to share their commitment to and



experience with the issue. The cadre will also be available, as needed and invited, to provide briefings for federal policy makers.

- *Broad and targeted communications*--Through its champion spokespersons, CCSSO will develop a communications strategy to include media inter-

views, op-editorials, and letters to the editor. The Council will develop and disseminate a set of resources on early education, via print and electronic media. These will include periodic policy briefs on important issues affecting early education, and monthly spotlights/snapshots profiling effective state policies, practices and individual champions linking preschool with the K-12 system.

- *States, the essential focus*--The Council will provide technical assistance and support to the chief officers and their staffs in the Pew affiliated states of Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York so that they can become effective partners in their respective on-going early education state campaigns.
- *Partnering for change*--The Council will include early childhood education as a priority for its work with key K-12 partner organizations and alliances, with the objective of issuing at least two joint policy briefs, statements and/or publications on universal, high-quality preschool.



For information about this grant project, contact: Jana Martella, (202) 336-7057, janam@ccsso.org or Jinhee Lee (202) 336-7051, jinheel@ccsso.org.

The focus on high quality universal preschool at the Council in 2003 is sponsored by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

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