

# Campaign Connections

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



A CDC Campaign to Raise Awareness of Childhood Development

July 2006

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## April Showers Bring Campaign Flowers!

**Autism Awareness Month Activities  
Wrap Up With Success**

Throughout April, the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign conducted outreach activities to promote campaign messages and materials in local communities and among health care professionals. During this year's National Autism Awareness Month, we focused on reaching parents, health care professionals, and child care providers in cities across the country through grassroots and electronic outreach.

### **Community Outreach Week**

The week of April 10–14, 2006, was designated as "Learn the Signs. Act Early. Community Outreach Week." During this week, 115 of our campaign champions delivered campaign flyers to local health care professionals and child care providers and encouraged members of both groups to download or order materials. Armed with campaign t-shirts and sample health care professional kits, these dedicated foot soldiers reached across 30 states.

### **Health Care Professional E-card**

Autism Awareness Month presents a special opportunity to engage health care professionals at a personal level. Through an e-card push, we reached out to this audience where it hits home: in their e-mail inbox. This electronic greeting card emphasized the importance of early intervention and increased dialogue with parents.

To reach the campaign's most important audience—pediatricians—the campaign worked with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to develop an article for the April issue of *AAP News*, the organization's official member publication, which reaches 60,000 members. In addition, 11" x 17" campaign information pieces were inserted into the magazine for pediatricians to pull out and save.

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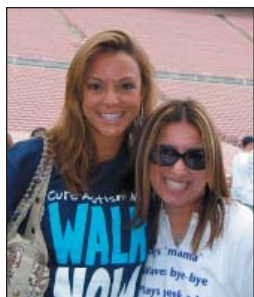


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## Autism Speaks and CDC Collaborate

National campaign partner Autism Speaks launched its nationwide advertising campaign in April, helping to spread the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign messages of early intervention and monitoring a child’s development. In collaboration with CDC, Autism Speaks created a series of television public service announcements in English and Spanish that reach out to parents and get their attention using a series of statistics. The ad campaign is sponsored by the Ad Council and will be running in markets across the country. Watch for it in your area!

## Eva La Rue Participates in Los Angeles CAN Walk



Campaign spokesperson Eva La Rue participated in Cure Autism Now’s (CAN) autism walk on April 22 in Los

Angeles along with nearly 10,000 other autism champions. “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign representatives also attended the walk and exhibited materials at a booth with campaign champion Sofía Quezada. A national campaign partner, CAN raised more than \$1 million towards the cause! Congratulations on a successful event!

## Health Care Professionals: Conference Season Kicks Into High Gear

With summer here, the health care professional conference season has kicked off with a bang. As a primary audience, health care professionals must be aware of the importance of early intervention and of knowing the developmental milestones a child should be reaching. To help spread this message, campaign representatives will attend four major conferences over the next seven months. They will attend the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Nursing, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and others throughout the year. Campaign representatives already attended the Society of Pediatric Nurses and Pediatric Academic Societies’ national conferences in April. Last year, we reached 65,000 health care professionals through conferences, and we look forward to another successful season in 2006!

## Consumer Online and Grassroots Outreach Going Strong!

With the help of committed campaign champions and partners, the campaign continues to reach new and diverse audiences across the country with messages of childhood development. Here are a few recent successes:

- The National Rural Health Association recently added a campaign summary and

website link to its “Members and Partners” webpage, which receives nearly 45,000 unique visitors each month.

- The California Rural Indian Health Board distributed campaign information cards at two health fairs in April, helping reach a niche market of parents and professionals.
- The YMCA included a campaign summary in its February 28 issue of *Hot Facts*, a weekly blast fax that is distributed to each YMCA branch (approximately 2,500) across the country. In addition, a campaign summary and image were included in the February monthly newsletter, a poster-size piece that is displayed in all YMCA branches.
- Kidshealth.org has included the campaign summary and website link on its “Understanding Autism” page under the Additional Resources tab.

## Media Round-up

Campaign spokesperson Eva La Rue and “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” were both featured in the spring issue of *HealthWise* magazine. In the three-page cover story, Ms. La Rue speaks about the campaign, and the article includes a copy of the informational card. *HealthWise* is a family wellness publication focusing on health and lifestyle issues that reaches about 1.2 million readers per year.

In today's world of media overload, it can be challenging to make sure your messages are "cutting through the clutter" and reaching the people you want them to reach. The "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign has taken advantage of some "new media" vehicles and has come out on top with the important messages of childhood development.

### Nontraditional Outlets

Using nontraditional media outlets has been an important strategy for the campaign in reaching target audiences. As with the original launch to consumers in 2005, the campaign PSA was displayed on the giant Panasonic Astrovision screen in New York City's Times Square during Autism Awareness Month. The PSA aired 48 times a day—twice each hour—reaching the millions of passersby in the Big Apple.

The Goodyear Tire Company's blimp carried campaign information over major sporting events throughout February and March. The "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign message and website were placed on several airships, helping us to reach sporting event attendees (likely many fathers) throughout the popular March Madness basketball season.

### Podcasts: Reaching Parents on the Internet Airwaves

With the growing popularity of iPods and other mp3 players, the popularity of podcasts—or Internet radio programs—is increasing as well. This medium is a portable way to get important messages about childhood development to parents and consumers that has a longer shelf life than most other forms of media. Podcasts are easy to listen to at any time. If you miss the original airing, you can find it archived on the site. To listen, you simply visit the podcast website and download the show you want to hear.

Taking advantage of this form of new media to reach parents, CDC's autism expert Dr. Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp was interviewed on the April 16th airing of "101 Uses for Baby Wipes," a popular podcast dealing with children's and parenting issues. Download the podcast here. Watch for an episode with campaign champion Sofia Quezada in the future.

Campaign spokesperson Eva La Rue will also be participating in a podcast reaching moms nationwide—MommyCast.com. Keep an eye out for more information!

### Barbara Tames

*Campaign Champion  
Special Education Teacher,  
Virginia Public Schools*



**Barbara and students from her class**

"Identifying early warning signs is paramount for supporting children with developmental delays, and nothing is more important than children receiving early intervention," said Barbara Tames, a special education teacher of nearly 25 years.

Barbara sees the importance of early intervention every day in her work with children diagnosed with autism and other developmental delays; therefore, she strives to increase awareness of developmental milestones and early intervention throughout her community.

*Read more of Barbara's Partner Spotlight at [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)*

### ***Have an inspiring story to tell?***

If you or someone you know has an inspiring story to tell as a result of becoming involved in the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign, please send it to [actearly@cdc.gov](mailto:actearly@cdc.gov). We're always looking for success stories to share with partners and campaign champions throughout the country, and we want to hear from you!

## Kudos to You!

Thanks to you—our dedicated campaign partners and champions—we have increased awareness and education about childhood development across the country. You continue to play a vital role in educating parents, health care professionals, and child care providers to ensure that children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Sincere thanks to you for your commitment and support!

### Special thanks to:

- All the campaign champions who helped make Community Outreach Week a success
- Sofía Quezada and son Julian for helping share campaign messages at the Los Angeles CAN walk

If you've been involved in your community, the campaign wants to know. Send an e-mail to [actearly@cdc.gov](mailto:actearly@cdc.gov) with your story.

## ON THE HORIZON: What's next?

### Child Care Provider Outreach to Begin

Over the next several months, we will develop campaign materials and outreach strategies targeting specifically child care providers and early childhood educators. As with the audiences of parents and health care professionals, your support in helping to educate those in your community will be critical. Stay tuned for more information on how you can help.

### Template Materials

To help you raise awareness of childhood development and your organization simultaneously, we have created template versions of the campaign flyer and poster that allow you to localize them with your organization's name and contact information. Watch the campaign website for more information.

## What People are Saying

*"Events like CAN's 'Walk Now' are wonderful! These events provide parents the opportunity to educate others and help children reach their full potential."*

– Sofía Quezada,  
Campaign Champion

## Want to get involved?

If you are looking for ways to get more involved with the campaign, be sure to visit the Partner section of the website ([www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)) and check out our "How to Get Involved" page for ideas. You'll find ideas and tools to help you reach out to your communities, friends, and family to help them learn the signs and act early.

### Contact Us

Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention  
"Learn the Signs. Act Early."

E-mail:  
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