

Campaign Connections

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



A CDC Campaign to Raise Awareness of Childhood Development

June 2008

In This Issue

Mission Possible:
*Organization for
Autism Research*

**One-on-One with Dr.
Georgina Peacock**

Campaign Update:
What's Going On?

Spotlight On...

Kudos to You!

**What People Are
Saying**



Mission Possible

Organization for Autism Research's Innovative Initiatives Outreach to Latinos

The "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign's Innovative Initiatives program is in full swing and is already producing great results. Below is a snapshot of the great efforts by one national partner to reach underserved populations with the important message of learning the signs of development.

WHO: The Organization for Autism Research (OAR).

THE MISSION: To raise the level of awareness of developmental delays and the importance of early childhood screening in at least 500 Latino families in Georgia—the third fastest-growing Latino population in the United States.

THE PROJECT: To train promotoras (Latino community health workers) to educate parents on early childhood development and how to identify potential developmental delays in select Georgia Latino communities. Promotoras have been used with great success in health promotion and prevention in the Latino-based community because they have an intimate knowledge and understanding of Latino culture, language, and communities.

To train the promotoras, OAR used campaign messaging to create bilingual materials, including a promotora training guide, flip charts, and magnets. Using these materials, OAR conducted a 1-day promotora training session with 18 participants in Duluth, Georgia. The training focused on preparing the promotoras to work in their communities to raise awareness of childhood development and the warning signs of developmental delays.

THE TEST: A week after the training session, the promotoras put their training to the test at a local Latino community health fair with nearly 2,000 attendees. OAR hosted a table at the health fair staffed with 12 of the trained promotoras. During the health fair, they spoke with parents about the importance of monitoring a child's development and early intervention. They also distributed campaign materials and magnets with the campaign's toll-free number.

OAR Executive Director Mike Maloney stated, "We know there are language and cultural barriers to reaching Latinos with health information. Targeting promotoras took us past those obstacles, and this training helped them to develop a working knowledge of the campaign's messages in a practical way. With this information in hand, the promotoras can now educate more Latino parents about child development. I feel strongly that their training will have a positive impact on the level of awareness among Latino communities in Georgia and ultimately, across the country, as OAR, other CDC partners, and the CDC continue to expand their efforts."

The success of OAR's training is another example of the organization's dedication and commitment to educating communities about the importance of monitoring developmental milestones and early intervention.

Stay tuned for more exciting news from our other Innovative Initiatives partners!

One-on-One with...

Dr. Georgina Peacock: A Developmental Pediatrician's Thoughts about the Campaign



Georgina Peacock, MD, MPH, who joined the campaign in 2007 recently sat down with Campaign Connections to answer some questions and provide her viewpoint about the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign. A developmental pediatrician, she joins us as an

Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) fellow at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In this second feature profile, Dr. Peacock shares with us her thoughts on the importance of monitoring developmental milestones. To learn more about Dr. Peacock from the August 2007 issue of Campaign Connections, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/partners/newsletters/2007/>

Q. What is the most important advice you can give to parents to help them monitor their child's development?

A. The most important thing parents can do is interact with their children by doing things like playing and reading books with them. Parents are experts in their own child's development, so when they sense that their child is experiencing a delay or something "isn't quite right," it is important to bring this to the attention of the child's doctor.

Q. Why do you think it is important for not only parents, but health care professionals and child care providers, to look for developmental milestones?

A. It is important to have different people in a child's life monitor his or her development. Each person might observe a child in a slightly different way and detect a developmental delay that may otherwise go unnoticed. Also, children sometimes act differently in different situations. For example, for a child who does not have brothers or sisters, there may be opportunities to see peer interaction in a child care setting that wouldn't be seen at home. Monitoring milestones is one way of making sure that a child is reaching his or her full potential. The "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign Web site has an interactive milestones checklist that can be filled out by various people to help get an idea of how

a child is functioning at different ages. Go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly/interactive/index.html> to use the interactive milestone checklist.

Q. When traveling to conferences throughout the country, what do you hear people talking about related to child development and the campaign?

A. When I am at conferences, people often tell me that they really like the campaign materials and find them easy to understand and use. Many have told me that they distribute the materials to parents and doctors to use as reference and educational tools. They often talk to me about the importance of monitoring children's development and are glad that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is interested in helping create awareness about the early signs of developmental delays and autism.

Q. Before you joined the campaign team, you were a champion talking to other parents and distributing campaign materials in your community. What inspired you to be a champion with the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Campaign? Why is it important for champions to distribute campaign materials to health care professionals, child care providers, and other parents in their communities?

A. I wanted to use the campaign materials because I believe that it is very important to identify children with delays as early as possible. These materials are a way to start the conversation about development. Parents, health care professionals, and early educators are all interested in children and child development; so, reminding them to "Learn the Signs." is easy.

Q. Looking to the future, what direction do you believe the campaign should take?

A. It is important for health care professionals, parents, and early educators to not only understand child development, but also to know where and how to refer children for services if they suspect a delay. Because of this, it will be important for the campaign to provide more referral resources to help connect children to services that can help them maximize their potential.

Look for Dr. Peacock at several health care professional and child care provider organization conferences in 2008.

Campaign Update: What's Going On?

Healthy Advice Networks

The campaign partnered with Healthy Advice Networks to distribute 700 Health Care Provider Resource Kits and 800 sets of informational cards for patient literature racks in women's health practices all over the nation. Healthy Advice Networks is an organization that provides health education materials and

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programs to patients during doctor visits. The organization also will air the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign public service announcement (PSA) on its closed-circuit television network in more than 40,000 primary care and specialty physicians’ offices, reaching an estimated 200 million patients each year.

Keep an eye out for the campaign’s PSA and materials the next time you visit your doctor!

African-American Outreach Reaches New Heights

With amazing results so far in reaching out to African-American communities through megachurches, the campaign team continues to attend conferences and community events to introduce the campaign to this audience across the country.

Campaign Reaches Far and Wide Through the Full Gospel Baptist Church International Fellowship Conference

The campaign partnered with the Greater St. Stephens Full Gospel Baptist Church to have a presence at the Full Gospel Baptist Church International Fellowship conference in Atlanta. The 2007 International Conference connected largely African-American organizations with more than 4,000 church leaders, 30,000 families, and thousands of businesses and community organizations. We distributed a new multicultural flyer at the conference and displayed all of the campaign’s free resources for parents, health care professionals, and child care providers.

Campaign PSA Touches the Sky Through Daystar Television Network

Through our exposure at the Full Gospel Baptist Church International Fellowship conference, Daystar Television Network, the second largest Christian television network in the world, has partnered with the campaign to air the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” PSA. Daystar has a potential audience reach of more than 128 million viewers in the United States alone, which includes 60 million cable and satellite homes. You just may see the PSA on a television near you very soon!

Campaign Connects with Child Care Provider Organizations Across the Nation

In 2007, the campaign developed relationships with government and nonprofit organizations that work with child care professionals and early educators to promote the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign and its free resources.

Since launching the child care provider component of the campaign in November 2006,

- More than 13,000 resource kits have been distributed.
- Nearly 40,000 people have visited the child care provider section of the Web site.

- Nearly 5,500 child care provider materials have been downloaded.

The campaign team would like to thank all those organizations who helped to make the following child care provider outreach opportunities possible:

- Nearly 900 Child Care Providers Resource Kits sent to Early Head Start (EHS) grantees and regional EHS centers.
- Articles about the campaign and availability of the Child Care Providers Resource Kit placed in
 - o Healthy Child Care, a bimonthly publication reaching 25,000 people.
 - o Child Health Talk, a quarterly newsletter distributed to 2,000 National Black Child Development Institute members
 - o The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies’ (NACCRA) newsletter and NACCRA’s Web site, which has 5,500 subscribers and nearly 77,000 visitors a month.
 - o The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) newsletter and the SECA Reporter, reaching 250 SECA leaders and 20,000 members.

National Health Center Week Outreach Update

For the second year in a row, we contacted public health centers participating in National Health Center Week to let them know about the campaign and to offer materials to support local health fairs and other events. Through these centers, the campaign helped increase awareness about developmental milestones and delays among parents of children who rely on public health centers for needed care. The campaign was successful in engaging more than 70 organizations in 31 states to distribute more than 70 Health Care Provider Resource Kits, 10,000 information cards, and 5,000 flyers, reaching diverse populations of medically underserved and uninsured patients.

Campaign Partners and Champions “Paint the Country Purple” for National Autism Awareness Month 2008

The campaign enjoyed another exciting National Autism Awareness Month in April. To support this important awareness initiative, the campaign launched the “Paint the County Purple” challenge. This challenge aimed to spur organizations and individuals to canvass local communities across the United States with campaign messages and materials. During the month, we hoped to encourage you—our campaign partners and champions—to rise to the challenge and conduct creative outreach activities to raise awareness about the importance of monitoring childhood development. We are eager to highlight some of the fantastic outreach activities that have been submitted for the challenge in an upcoming issue of Campaign Connections and our partner spotlight series—stay tuned.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Maria Abinader

“Hearing the diagnosis of ‘autism’ for the youngest of my four children left me and my family feeling like we were in a tunnel of the unknown,” says Maria Abinader, a campaign champion and parent advocate in her Hispanic community. The Learn the Signs. Act Early. campaign resources helped Maria and her family to navigate that tunnel to understand and help Maria’s youngest child, Luli.

Read Maria Abinader’s complete story at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/partners/partnerspotlight.html>

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. We are always looking for success stories to share with partners and campaign champions throughout the country. We want to hear from you!

Kudos to You!

Thanks to

- The health centers that distributed campaign materials during National Health Center Week.
- The child care provider organizations that promote and distribute campaign materials.
- NACCRRRA and NACCP for promoting the campaign to their members through electronic communications and their Web sites.

What People are Saying...

“This is exactly what we’re looking for!”

—Glenda Bean, Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), referring to the campaign materials

“We get great response from the campaign materials; they really engage parents, prompting many questions regarding childhood development.”

— Wendy Nilsen, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, University of Rochester Medical Center, referring to her use of the materials at The Children’s Center in Monroe County, New York

Contact Us

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