



Love, Listen, Read & Sing

start smart

Because the first three years
last a lifetime.

United Way & Franklin County's Birth to Three Initiative

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START SMART WEB SITE PROVIDES EARLY LEARNING ADVICE AND MORE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

***During National "Week of the Young Child" April 2 – 8, Start Smart
Highlights Early Care Assistance for Parents & Caregivers in Franklin Co***

COLUMBUS, OH – Franklin County's and United Way of Central Ohio's early care and learning initiative, Start Smart, will recognize the national "Week of the Young Child" by urging parents and caregivers to visit www.startsmartcolumbus.org and to do all they can to ensure their baby, toddler or pre-schooler is in a quality child care setting.

"Start Smart offers a wealth of information, free materials, creative ideas and more to help parents of young children," said Sally Yurchuck, director of the initiative.

"Preparing children for kindergarten and success in school starts at birth. Our resources focus on the simple, every day things that parents and caregivers can do to help their children to learn and grow. We are especially pleased to include the new ***Born Learning*** materials among our resources."

Yurchuck said Start Smart recently added new materials to the web site, and continue to offer the favorites that parents use frequently. The web site includes:

- More than 100 creative activity tips for children from birth to 3;
- An updated, monthly calendar of local events for families with young children;
- A link to the national ***Born Learning*** site (***Born Learning*** is a national early care initiative sponsored by the United Way of America, in collaboration with the Ad Council and Civitas);
- A downloadable booklet on how to find and keep quality child care;
- A directory of early childhood services and organizations in Franklin County.

As a multi-faceted initiative, Start Smart is working with more than 40 local partner agencies to improve early childhood services in several areas. These include raising the quality of child care centers and home settings, advanced training for child care providers, offering learning resources to parents and caregivers, and assisting with public policy as it related to early care and education.

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Parents and caregivers also may call **23-SMART (237-6278)** to request a free “flip-chart” booklet of activity tips, a free booklet on how to find and keep quality child care, and free packet of early care materials from ***Born Learning***. Activity tips also are available in Spanish and Somali.

“Start Smart continues to make a measurable difference in Franklin County,” said Janet Jackson, United Way of Central Ohio President. “Because of this initiative, our community is ahead of the national average of nationally accredited child care centers and child care home providers. We have dozens more child care center directors and teachers better trained for the rigors of working with small children. We have hundreds more parents better informed about what to look for in quality child care and how to work with their child care provider to ensure ongoing quality care. In addition, we have contributed to state and local public policy as it relates to early childhood care and education.”

The national “Week of the Young Child” is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age eight.