



Summer 2010

News and Information for Parents, Educators and Donors

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Birth to Five Helpline: More Valuable Than Ever

Calls to Southwest Human Development's helpline for children five-years-old and younger have doubled in the last 12 months, and are continuing to grow almost daily.

Many of these calls are coming from parents grappling with challenges brought on by the economic recession – job loss, mounting debt, loss of health insurance – and the resulting stress takes a toll on families and young children.

"I never dreamed I would be in this position" is a phrase we frequently hear from families who are struggling with their new situation and its impact on their children.

Helping parents understand how change and stress can affect their children is an important part of our work. Research has found that babies as young as one month old can sense, and are impacted, when a parent is angry or sad.

Yet a new national survey reveals that only 34% of parents believe this. (See Parent Survey story inside for more information).

At the Birth to Five Helpline, we take our time with callers, as parents express frustration, anger, and even fear about their child's behavior, whether it's "acting out" or no longer sleeping at night.

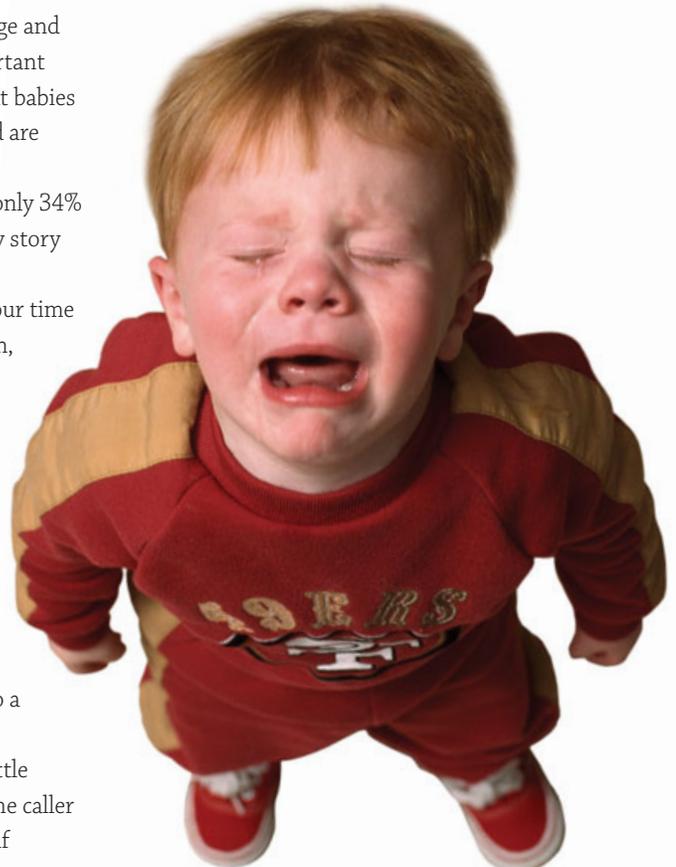
When one mother called with questions about her toddler's escalating tantrums, the Helpline's child-development specialist gently inquired about the history of his behavior. Soon, this mother was discussing the loss of the family's home and a resulting move to a less-expensive part of town.

A new 90-minute commute left very little family time at the end of the day. After the caller finished telling her story she found herself

commenting: "Wow, we really have been going through a lot; I hadn't realized how much until now."

The Helpline gave her the opportunity to slow down, share her story and realize that family stress was likely the cause of her child's increasing tantrums. The child-development specialist was able to help with strategies not just for dealing with his behavior, but also for meeting both her child's needs and her own, allowing this mother to begin to address the real cause of her son's behavior changes.

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**SOUTHWEST
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**

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New Parent Survey Shows Gaps in Child Development Knowledge

A recently released survey shows that parents of young children are getting the message about the importance of reading, talking and playing with their children – but most lack an understanding of their children's social-emotional development.

Key findings from this 2009 national parent survey, conducted by Hart Research Associates for the well respected early childhood organization Zero to Three, reveal a number of these knowledge gaps. For example:

- Research shows that most children are capable of feeling good or bad about themselves between ages one and two.
...but 53% of parents don't think a child can experience these feelings until they are older.
- Babies as young as six months can experience feelings of sadness and fear.
...but 69% of parents think this developmental milestone occurs later in a young child's life.
- Between the ages of three and five most children develop the capacity to control their emotions – for example, asking for help when frustrated rather than having a tantrum or biting.
...but 43% of parents believe that children can control their emotions by age three, and 20% expect this by age two.

Why does this matter? Because unrealistic expectations have been identified as risk factors for harsh parenting and for child abuse, while greater knowledge of child development has been associated with more sensitive parenting and children with fewer behavior problems.

Because the incidence of abuse rises during economically stressful times, at Southwest Human Development we are working harder than ever to help families understand their children's development. The Birth to Five Helpline is a wonderful vehicle for this kind of education. ★

2nd Annual Walk With Me Raises Over \$150,000

Walk With Me 2010 was a great success! Perfect weather and outstanding community support came together at Steele Indian School Park on May 1. Seventy-eight teams and 1,150 participants raised over \$150,000 to benefit children with disabilities!

Emceed by Jude LaCava of FOX-10 Sports, special recognition was given to presenting sponsors Willis of Arizona, Humana of Arizona, and radio partners 92.3 KTAR and 98.7 The Peak.

Honorary Chair KJ Wagner spoke movingly of the importance of corporate giving.

Walk Ambassadors, children who have received services from Easter Seals Southwest Human Development, inspired everyone with their stories and led the 1.25 mile walk with their families.

After the Walk, children of all ages enjoyed games and activities, as well as the refreshments provided by California Pizza Kitchen, Dunkin' Donuts, and Sweet Tomatoes.

CVS Caremark was the top fundraising Walk



Getting under way!



Lots of smiles!

team, collecting over \$51,000 company-wide. These funds directly benefit programs such as assistive technology, autism services and a specialized feeding program for infants and young children.

Walk With Me was an exceptional experience of people sharing the spirit of giving, from children offering their spare pennies to corporate CEOs rallying the combined efforts of their entire companies.

Many thanks to all who participated; we hope you will join us again next year! ★

Quality First!: Improving Child Care in Arizona

Research tells us that children's learning begins at birth and that the relationships between children and their caregivers profoundly impacts their learning and healthy development. This is why early care and education experiences, most particularly child care and preschool, are so important.

In fact, studies show that quality programs result in better school readiness, improved high school graduation rates, a better chance of college attendance, and higher income levels as adults.

They also mean lower rates of involvement in juvenile delinquency and crime, less grade repetition, and less remedial education.

New results from a long-term study funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that poor-quality care in the first few years of life can have a lasting impact on a child's learning and behavior. According to the study, behavior and learning problems persisted through the participating children's 15th birthdays.

What does a quality early care and education program look like? This question

is one that Southwest Human Development has been interested in since its beginnings nearly 30 years ago.

Now we have the opportunity to share our expertise with child care centers across Arizona through Quality First, a quality improvement and rating system developed and funded by First Things First.*

Quality First represents Arizona's first-ever effort to systematically address child care quality on a statewide level.

In high-quality programs, children are engaged in activities with responsive, nurturing adults who stimulate development and learning and prepare children to successfully enter kindergarten.

Already we have begun to see changes in the classrooms where we work side by side with teachers and child care directors. Incentives allow centers to make purchases that help them meet goals. In some cases that means children now have access to age-appropriate learning and play materials, which can create magic when combined with well-trained teachers who know how to engage young children.

Quality First also provides access to health consultants and, in some areas, to



mental health and disabilities consultants. Consultation can improve center health and safety, reduce expulsion rates, and allow children with developmental delays and disabilities to participate to their fullest ability – in short, ensure that all children are engaged and learning.

Quality First is a program of First Things First, operated in partnership with several community partners in Arizona. Regulated child care centers and family/home-based providers are eligible to apply. For more information go to the First Things First website at azftf.gov. ★



**Quality First! is brought to you by First Things First (www.azftf.gov). First Things First (FTF), approved by Arizona voters, works to ensure that our youngest children have access to quality early childhood experiences so they will start school healthy and ready to succeed. Across the state, FTF regional partnership councils – in collaboration with local leaders – identify educational and health needs of children from birth through age 5 in their communities and fund strategies to address those needs.*

Birth to Five Helpline *cont. from pg. 1*

The Birth to Five Helpline (1-877-705-KIDS/ 5437) offers parents throughout Arizona free early childhood development information, support and resource referrals. The Helpline is answered by child-development specialists who have access to the agency's early childhood professionals – nurses, psychologists, and disabilities specialists.

An infant mental health clinician answers calls to the Fussy Baby program, which is accessed through the Helpline and assists parents of infants who are “colicky,” or cry inconsolably. Hours are Monday

through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Calls come in from professionals as well, many of whom are calling to make sure the Birth to Five Helpline has not succumbed to recent budget cuts. Others are increasing their referrals to the Helpline as their own services are cut back. One pediatric practice no longer has a triage nurse and now refers many parents with developmental and behavioral questions to the Helpline.

Here's a testament to the Helpline by a local doctor:

“This has been such a great resource for our

families and it makes our job easier. We are able to spend more time addressing the medical issues during our exams. Families are getting the information they need regarding child development questions from the Birth to Five Helpline.”

- Dianne Dunnigan, MD, Phoenix Indian Hospital

We are grateful to our many donors for supporting the Birth to Five Helpline and keeping this valuable resource available to parents throughout Arizona. ★

Other News & Upcoming Events

Top CEO Award Received

Southwest Human Development is proud to congratulate Ginger Ward as one of the Top 25 Most Admired CEOs for 2010!

This annual award from *The Phoenix Business Journal* highlights local leaders that epitomize achievement because their companies are successful, have helped to build Valley business and have contributed their time and expertise in the community on numerous levels. We at Southwest Human Development are proud to have such a visionary leader for nearly three decades. ★



Save the Date for Portraits of Opportunity

We are looking forward to another successful Portraits of Opportunity event on Thursday, October 28. This unique event features the stories of children served by Southwest Human Development as seen through the eyes of some of the Valley's top professional photographers.

For more information regarding this year's event, please contact Ellen Lord at 602-224-1750. ★



**Southwest Human Development is a non-profit organization.
To make a tax deductible contribution please call 602-266-5976 or visit us online at www.swhd.org.**