

MEDIA ADVISORY / PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

For Jan. 16, 2009

Minneapolis Children to Brave Cold in March Down Nicollet Mall

YWCA children, teachers and community advocates to raise awareness about early childhood education

WHAT: More than 100 preschool-aged children and teachers will march down Nicollet Mall at 10 a.m. on Jan. 16 to ask Minnesota legislators to make early childhood education a top priority during the upcoming legislative session. The public is encouraged to join the march to help ensure that all Minnesota children have access to quality and affordable early childhood education.

With a faltering economy and increasing demand for support, it is more important than ever to return Minnesota to its status as a national leader in early childhood education. Early childhood education is one of the best investments Minnesota can make. Economists estimate the benefit-cost ratio as high as \$17 for every dollar invested in early childhood education (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2003).

January is Early Childhood Awareness Month at the YWCA of Minneapolis. Ongoing activities throughout the month include a parent dinner and advocacy training on Jan. 22 and a forum on early childhood education and women's rights on Jan. 28.

WHEN: Friday, Jan. 16, 2009

9:30 a.m.

Public comments by Becky Roloff, CEO of the YWCA of Minneapolis, Susie Brown of Child Care Works and Todd Otis of Ready 4 K

10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

March down Nicollet Mall (*between 12th and 9th St.*)

WHERE: YWCA of Minneapolis and Nicollet Mall

1130 Nicollet Mall (*between 12th St. and 9th St.*)
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Please note: March will be held indoors if the temperature drops below 10 degrees.

PHOTO/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Becky Roloff, CEO of the YWCA of Minneapolis, will be available to discuss the YWCA of Minneapolis' position on early childhood education issues in Minnesota
- Susie Brown, executive director of Child Care Works, and Todd Otis, president of Ready 4 K, are available to speak about their advocacy work in the community
- YWCA Children's Center managers are available to discuss the importance of early childhood education
- More than 100 children and adults marching down Nicollet bundled up for the winter weather

WHY: High-quality early childhood education is crucial for children in the first five years of life. Research shows that children receiving quality early childhood education start kindergarten on track and ready to learn. They also are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college and lead more stable adult lives.

The people of Minnesota will ultimately pay more in the long-run if we refuse to educate our children from the start. All children should have access to quality early education that will prepare them for success in school and life. The YWCA of Minneapolis calls on legislators, teachers, parents, and community members to help Minnesota's children by supporting more public funding for early childhood education.

WHO: The YWCA of Minneapolis is a nonprofit organization striving to achieve the empowerment of women and girls and to eliminate racism. The YWCA Early Childhood Education Programs serve more than 450 infants, toddlers, pre-school and school-age children annually. In 2007, 70 percent were from low-income households and 82 percent were children of color. The YWCA strives to nurture young children in partnership with their parents and prepare them for success in school. For more information, please visit www.ywcamppls.org.

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