What Can This Program Do For You?

*Preparing to Parent, Parenting the First Year,* and *Parenting the Second and Third Years* are proven resources that provide opportunities for your organization to:

- Maintain visibility with new parents throughout the year, with age-paced, monthly or bi-monthly newsletters. Your organization's name can be printed on them.
- Provide a research-based community service that is proven effective in improving early parenting skills.
- Reach beyond the boundaries of race, social class, or physical distance at a minimal cost. Reach socially isolated families.
- Develop a coalition of community organizations to address the local needs of parents.

"The return on investment for the hospital in terms of positive community service was excellent. We were surprised at the number of calls from parents who gave us their enthusiastic thanks."

Waukesha Memorial Hospital Administrator

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For More Information -

- on how to distribute *Preparing to Parent, Parenting the First Year* or *Parenting the Second and Third Years* in your community:

**Within Wisconsin contact:**

- The Family Living Agent in your Cooperative Extension county office. Look for Extension under your county name in the phone book.

**Outside Wisconsin contact:**

- Professor Dave Riley  
  University of Wisconsin  
  1300 Linden Dr.  
  Madison, WI, USA  
  53706-1575  
  Tele: 608-262-3314  
  E-mail: dariley@wisc.edu  
  Website: [http://parenting.uwex.edu](http://parenting.uwex.edu)

Parents can sign up online to receive the parenting newsletters by email.

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Early Childhood Brain Development:

We Know It's Important, But What Can We Do About It?

*Preparing to Parent*  
*Parenting the First Year*  
*Parenting the Second and Third Years*
EARLY EXPERIENCE AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

We have known for many years that early experience has a big impact on a child's later abilities. Recent research has shown us how and why early experience is important.

The prenatal period is a critical time for infant development. The Preparing to Parent newsletters help reinforce the health behavior advice that medical professionals provide to expectant parents. Since babies' brains are not fully-grown at birth, early experiences in the first several years after birth change the way the brain grows.

We know quite a bit about the kinds of parenting that are better, or worse, for children's development. But how can we get that information into the hands of parents, in a form that they can really use?

"My husband has learned more from these newsletters than I thought possible. He says to keep up the good work!!"
LaCrosse County Parent

A Program You Can Use

Here is a proven way to help parents: Preparing to Parent, Parenting the First Year and Parenting the Second and Third Years instructional newsletter series. They address some of the best known threats to early brain development:

- Chemical exposure (including lead, cigarette smoke, alcohol, poisons).
- Inadequate nutrition (e.g. folic acid prevents neural tube defects)
- Undiagnosed perception problems (including hearing and vision).
- Child abuse and neglect (it provides alternate social cognitions to the ones that commonly lead to abuse or neglect, and it tells parents what to do instead of striking children).

They also address the most important features of early parenting competence, especially focusing on:

- The sensitively responsive parenting that leads to secure attachment.
- Promotion of early language stimulation.

Proven Effective

Parents really read the parenting newsletters. Written at 5th grade reading level (good for 91% of the U.S. adult public), they come in English and Spanish editions.

In a field experiment, parents who received Parenting the First Year:

- Reported striking their babies significantly fewer times in the previous week than those parents who did not receive it.
- Provided an early home environment that was more intellectually stimulating.
- Had beliefs significantly less like those of child abusing parents.

"The parenting skills in my family were not the ones I wanted to pass on to my child. I like to study the alternatives your letter provides."
Dane County Parent