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## **LATINO CHILDREN LAGGING BEHIND IN PRE-K ENROLLMENT NATIONALLY**

*New PSA campaign by national organization Pre-K Now to encourage Latino parents to enroll their kids in pre-k programs*

(Washington, DC) – Latino children make up more than 20 percent (4.2 million) of the under five population in this country, and in some key states they add up to an even larger percentage. But according to a study by the organization Pre-K Now (“Pre-K and Latinos: the Foundation for America’s Future) only 40 percent of Hispanic children aged three to five are enrolled in early education programs nationally, compared to 59 percent of Caucasians and 64 percent of African Americans.

The same study found that around 2.5 million Latino children have no access to early education. Financial and logistical barriers, as well as lack of information about the availability of pre-k programs, are in great part responsible for this enrollment gap according to a majority of parents interviewed in an opinion poll conducted by the Tomás Rivera Policy institute for Pre-K Now.

To alleviate this growing problem, the non-profit organizations Pre-K Now and NACCRRA (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies) are introducing the campaign “*Prekinder: Aprendiendo a aprender*” (Learning to learn). Its goal is to inform Hispanic parents about the basic facts of a high quality early education and the benefits it provides to children enrolled in pre-k programs. This campaign, directed by Danielle Gonzales of Pre-K Now, is the result of two years of planning and research conducted by a national committee of experts in Latino culture and education.

“Those children who start their education between three and five years of age, when the brain is in full development, increase their chances to succeed in school and in life,” said Libby Doggett, Executive Director of Pre-K Now. “That is why Pre-K Now is pleased to launch this campaign to let Latino parents know that there are resources out there to help them enroll their children in early education programs.”

The campaign consists of TV and radio PSAs that provide a toll-free telephone number where information about pre-k programs in local communities can be obtained. The number, 1-800-424-2246, is NACCRRA’s Child Care Aware hotline, which is teaming up



with Pre-K Now to bring to parents its extensive network of informational and referral resources.

“NACCRRA works hard to ensure our nation guarantees access to early development and learning programs for all children,” said Linda Smith, Executive Director of NACCRRA. “We are proud to be part of this campaign urging Hispanic parents to enroll their kids in pre-k programs.”

In addition to the PSAs, a new website ([www.prekinder.org](http://www.prekinder.org)) has been launched containing extensive information about early education. Topics covered on the Internet site include sections with basic facts about pre-k, different types and quality of pre-k, the benefits it brings to children, how to find programs and critical information about the legal rights of parents regarding early education programs.

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*Pre-K Now collaborates with state advocates and policymakers to lead a movement for voluntary, high-quality pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds. The following funders contribute to making this important work possible: The Pew Charitable Trusts, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, RGK Foundation, CityBridge Foundation, PNC Financial Services Group, and the Schumann Fund for New Jersey.*

*Child Care Aware, a national initiative led by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), is committed to helping parents find the best information on locating quality child care and child care resources in their community. We do this by raising visibility for local child care resource and referral agencies nationwide and by connecting parents with the local agencies best equipped to serve theirs and their children needs.*