



## Capitalizing on Students' Language and Culture

Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute™

by José L. Rodríguez

### Inside this Issue:

- ❖ Joy of preschool reading
- ❖ Components of centers of excellence
- ❖ Equity vs. adequacy in school funding



The Hispanic population in the United States is very young. One in five zero to 5-year-olds are Hispanic. Hispanics also are the youngest ethnic group, and children under five represent about 11 percent of the total Hispanic population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

IDRA recognized these projections 11 years ago when the first Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute was begun to celebrate the International Week of the Young Child. It is a professional development experience that enhances early childhood educators' professional skills and gives them opportunities to network with colleagues and other experts and to learn from each other. Thousands of teachers, administrators and parents have been a part of this experience.

IDRA's mission "to create schools that work for all children" is always the focus of the institute to ensure that all children receive quality and equitable education throughout Texas and the United States. The institute focuses on ensuring that children who speak a

language other than English benefit from quality instructional programs that capitalize on students' language and culture.

In fact, this institute is the only early childhood conference that focuses on English language learners.

### Pedagogy and Curriculum

In 2000, White children had higher assessment scores in reading than Black children and Hispanic children. Access to high quality preschool is a key factor in achievement of young children. IDRA's early childhood institute has addressed these issues from the start and will continue doing so until these gaps narrow.

A major instructional concern in early childhood literacy programs is the varied language backgrounds of the children who come to daycare centers, preschools, kindergartens, and first, second, and third grades (Mandel Morrow, 2001).

The IDRA conference dedicates a day to each of the following concentrations: curriculum and pedagogy, features of successful early childhood programs, and parent and community engagement.

*La Semana del Niño* – continued on Page 2

IDRA provides excellent presenters to share their knowledge and experience in early childhood education.

When selecting presenters for the institute, we look closely at what they will be teaching and how this information will be disseminated. We want the participants to gather information, but also take this information and incorporate it into their own teaching.

It is equally important to address the socio-cultural issues that language-minority children bring with them to school on a daily basis.

### Features of Quality Early Childhood Education

Having received quality information on curriculum and pedagogy, institute participants are then guided through the features of quality early childhood programs. They get the opportunity to visit some of San Antonio’s best early childhood programs in action. Teachers are able to see some of the same concepts

## The IDRA institute focuses on ensuring that children who speak a language other than English benefit from quality instructional programs that capitalize on students’ language and culture.

being taught in different ways and augment their own teaching of the concept.

One participant stated, “Visiting the school was so beneficial, and it was exciting for me to see a dual language in action.”

After the site visits, the participants attend various concurrent sessions that highlight the features of quality early childhood programs such as classroom environment, learning centers, and preparing print-rich environments. Participants enjoy finding more information on Parents As Teachers (PAT), HIPPIY, Even Start, and Head Start programs and their features.

### Community and Parent Engagement

As parents’ education attainment increases, so does the early childhood enrollment rate of their children. However, in 2001, fewer Hispanics age 25 and older had completed high school than their Black and White counterparts – 57 percent of Hispanics, had completed high school, compared to 89 percent of Whites and 81 percent of other non-Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

On the third and final day of the IDRA institute, educators receive information on the importance of parent and community engagement. Parents of young children and professionals

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# The Joy of Preschool Reading

by **Bradley Scott, Ph.D.**

Preschool children can learn to read in a way that is developmentally and culturally appropriate if they are presented with the necessary supports. The *IDRA Newsletter* has previously described “centers of excellence” and the eight components that must be addressed for students to reach reading readiness success at the preschool level (Scott, 2003).

There is a research base that supports centers of excellence (See Page 4). José Rodríguez, of IDRA, has noted that, “when students’ prior knowledge is activated and their curiosity is stimulated, they begin to make positive associations to reading” (2003).

How do we activate students’ prior knowledge and raise their curiosity? It is even more important than ever that preschool teachers build exciting, excellent classrooms that promote literacy. What do these classrooms look like?

## Engaging Environment

Excellent classrooms are dynamic. They breathe life and excitement into preschool children about the joy of reading. At their center, students are acquiring basic skills and competencies in oral language

development, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print awareness (Schickedanz, 1999).

When entering a center of excellence, one sees a vibrant, active, engaging, interactive learning space where children are being supported to achieve reading competency with a teacher who guides and facilitates the process.

The environment is rich with a spirit of acceptance and valuing of diversity and cultural difference. It also resonates with the richness of language and print. Teachers encourage communication and language exploration through discussions in children’s first language and in English as a basis for learning English. Provocative questions on materials, books, pictures, computer-based materials, and other forms of print are used as a basis for learning.

## Provocative Activities

Through the activities they undertake, children are encouraged to talk to each other, speculate about the outcomes and inquiry, predict what might happen, and check their speculations against the actual outcomes of their reading.

In the library, they explore

predictable and non-predictable books to increase their capacity to extract word meaning from the way words are displayed in relation to pictures in books. They examine book characteristics to determine meaning. They practice pronouncing and sounding out letters to create words. And when they do, they stretch their understanding because they learn that words mean something in the real world (Schickedanz, 1999).

Through play and through direct and explicit instruction from the teacher, children get help in learning word meaning as their teacher reads stories to them. Story reading in context provides a powerful tool for the teacher to observe learners sounding out letters and words, defining new and unfamiliar words, and examining what children already know and bring to the reading experience and what they are acquiring.

Both with the teacher’s help and independent of the teacher, they practice rhyming and pronouncing sounds that they can compare with others to improve their oral language abilities. They connect letters to form new sounds and blends of sounds as they are read to and, in doing so, learn to figure out the pronunciation of words for which they also work out meaning.

*The Joy of Reading – continued on Page 5*

# Critical Components of Centers of Excellence

## Staffing

Center of excellence directors and at least one teacher possess a bachelor's degree. This teacher serves as lead teacher. At least 80 percent of the teachers have an associate of arts degree (Shen and Poppink, 2003; Yelland, 2000).

## Educational Equity

All classrooms in a center of excellence have the appropriate resources to support opportunities to learn regardless of the economic circumstance, English language learning level, disability, race, and gender (Scott, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002; *No Child Left Behind Act*, 2002). Diverse cultures represented in the classroom are respected and addressed in the instruction.

## Accountability

Education stakeholders, including parents, at centers of excellence hold themselves and each other responsible for the creation of classrooms of excellence that support the literacy development of children. Each stakeholder helps to build an appropriate educational environment and experience (Scott, 2002; *No Child Left Behind Act*, 2002; Scranton and Doubet, 2003).

## Teacher Expectations

Teachers in centers of excellence articulate high expectations for *all* young children and are expected to discuss high school and college completion at this very early age (Teale, 1978; Snow et al., 1998; Helm and Lang, 2003).

- The expectation is that children will be ready to read in kindergarten.
- The expectation is clearly and continually communicated to young children.
- The actions of teachers and other adults reflect the expectation.
- The reading success expectation is reflected in the curriculum and classroom activities.
- Children's reading efforts and successes are celebrated by adult stakeholders.
- Children are supported to celebrate and joyfully hold high expectations for their own genuine effort and success.

## Academic Achievement

Centers of excellence have measurable objectives consistent with state curriculum standards with special emphasis on the necessary prerequisite skills in literacy (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension) and other academic areas to be successful (National Reading Panel, 2000; CIRCLE, 2002; Wilson, 2003; Snow et al., 1996; Holiday and Parker, 1998; Pueples and Lowe, 1998; Irving, 2000).

- Kindergarten reading readiness and appropriate numeracy preparation are successfully demonstrated on classroom assessments and measurements.
- Student effort and high student outcomes reflect a belief in the possible appropriately transformed into the reality of demonstrated high performance.
- Children successfully achieve at the highest level of excellence in reading and numeracy readiness.

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2003

## Social Maturity

Young children have been trained and received guidance in self discipline to manage their learning individually and in groups in a way that creates personal and shared academic success and prepares them to move to higher levels of achievement (Schickendanz, 1999; Helms and Lang, 2003; Wilson, 2003; Whitten and Rodriguez-Campos; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines).

- Children learn to manage their own lives in school and beyond.
- Children learn to cooperate and work with others.
- Children learn to practice resilience and perseverance.
- Children learn academic goal setting and goal reaching.
- Children joyfully embrace learning and literacy as a key to their own success.

## Classroom Management

Centers of excellence adhere to organizational systems and structures in the classroom and the human, mechanical, and technical supports for learning. All of the interactive dimensions of the classroom's operation are aligned and integrated in a manner to support student achievement and excellence and the appropriate acquisition of skills and competencies for academic success (CIRCLE, 2002; Yelland, 2000; Dodge and Colker, 1998; Rand, 2000).

- Classroom curriculum and learning experiences are organized and structured for success.
- Human, mechanical, and technical supports for learning and literacy are aligned, articulated, and integrated to support reading readiness success.
- Curriculum is organized to engage the learner in oral language development, phonological, alphabet, and print awareness.
- The learning environment is print rich and provides meaningful, challenging, creative and joyful reading readiness opportunities in every learning/interest space.

## Parent Participation

Parents work collaboratively with teachers and other staff in schools and/or in homes in support of schools to create and build opportunities for academic excellence and success for their children (Epstein, 1996; Dodge and Colker, 1998; Bower, 2000; Fischer and Murray, 1998; Helms and Katz, 2001).

- Parents reinforce learning at home.
- Parents actively engage in building their own English language competency and proficiency.
- Teachers and parents collaborate on building children's reading readiness and school success.
- Parents are engaged to participate in classroom planning.
- Parents are presented with opportunities to participate in the learning experiences in classrooms.
- Parents, with teacher assistance, review student performance outcome data and plan for continued learning achievement and success.

These centers of excellence by their very nature become training centers.



Teachers guide these emerging readers in constructing meaning through story maps of familiar and new stories where the structure of stories are plotted and organized by the teacher with the children's help to determine characters, the setting, the problem or situations that must be handled, and the outcomes of the characters' actions. Together, they examine cause and effect, respond to problem and solution questions, conduct comparisons, and describe situations to gain meaning and understanding.

The teacher reads books to them, and they can become involved by chiming in, filling in the blank words, and practicing rhythm, pacing, and pronunciation (Schickedanz, 1999). These activities develop and extend phonemic awareness. Practicing reading and writing the alphabet, seeing the alphabet form words as letters name and label objects, places, spaces, activities, and people in the environment help to strengthen alphabet knowledge and strengthen each child's ability to read.

## **Print Rich Centers**

The environment supports reading in many ways. Naturally, items are labeled and named. But the environment also is print rich, in a way that research reports is necessary to ensure literacy, oral language development, and improved reading ability (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998; National Reading Panel, 2000; Goodman, 1986; Owocki, 2001; Armington, 1997; Schickedanz, 1999).

There are pictures and written materials available everywhere. The dramatic play areas have props where children can act out what they read and hear. They create their own stories with characters and plots and with problems and solutions they work out.

There are writing areas in the room where children can create their own stories or dictate stories to their

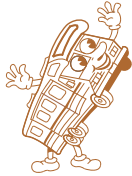
# **Did You Know?**

**Children who attend high quality pre-kindergarten programs are less likely to be held back a grade, less likely to need special education and more likely to graduate high school. They also earn more as adults.**  
– National Institute for Early Education Research, 2003

**Every dollar paid for providing very young children with high quality, full-day, year-round preschool generates a four dollar return to the children, their families and all taxpayers.**  
– National Institute for Early Education Research, 2002

**Forty states funded preschool programs in the 2001-02 school year. Only two states enrolled more than half of their 4-year-olds, and 20 states enrolled less than 10 percent.**  
– National Institute for Early Education Research, 2003

**A recent study of young Denver Public Schools students found that children who participated in a high-quality pre-kindergarten and kindergarten program consistently outperformed their peers several years later on the state assessment exam.**  
– Denver Post, 2004



**For more facts and statistics,  
go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.**

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teachers. There are read-aloud opportunities and "word walls" that foster real opportunities for phonological awareness, alphabet awareness, and oral language development.

There are materials available for children to publish their writing, including computers where children can actually practice their letters and spelling whole words. There are floor stories that children can engage in, with pocket and folder stories that they can manipulate.

Students are encouraged to create their own stories, letters, and other printed communications as they carry out activities that reflect the day-to-day experiences of life in the dramatic play center, literacy center, library, quiet area, desktop publishing area, large group and circle time area,

manipulative area, block area, and other centers that periodically open and close based upon the lessons being implemented (Armington, 1997; Owocki, 2001; Snow and Tabors, 1996; Baker et al, 1995; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998; National Reading Panel, 2000).

For students whose first language is other than English, the native language serves as the foundation for English language acquisition. Cognitive skills transfer from one language to another, and students who are literate in their first language will apply these skills and other academic proficiencies to the second language (National Reading Panel, 2000).

It is possible to create a world of reading excitement and joy in a center of reading excellence where children

*The Joy* – continued from Page 5

are learning to read excellently. Unlocking access to the curriculum in the upper grades begins with reading development at the preschool level.

## Resources

Armington, D. *The Living Classroom: Writing, Reading and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997).

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Goodman, Y.M. "Children Coming to Know Literacy," *Emergent Literacy: Writing*

and Reading (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1986).

National Reading Panel. *Report of the National Reading Panel – Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

Owocoki, G. *Make Way for Literacy: Teaching the Way Young Children Learn* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2001).

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Snow, C., and P. Tabors. "Intergenerational Transfer of Literacy," *Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practices* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

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## Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In January, IDRA worked with **8,537** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **41** training and technical assistance activities and **278** program sites in **14** states plus Mexico and Brazil. Topics included:

- ◆ TAKS Reading and Vocabulary Strategies for LEP Students
- ◆ Leadership Through Diversity
- ◆ Racial Harassment Prevention
- ◆ Title III Evaluation
- ◆ Fair Funding

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◆ Austin Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- ◆ Detroit Public Schools, Michigan
- ◆ Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma
- ◆ Parent Child Incorporated, Texas
- ◆ Rio Grande City ISD, Texas

### Activity Snapshot

Federal law requires school districts to provide gender equitable instruction to students. Recognizing its need to ensure that materials are free of gender-bias, one district in south Texas called upon the IDRA **South Central Collaborative for Equity**. The South Central Collaborative for Equity is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The center provided training to personnel in the school district to ensure that all children have more complete access to curriculum without the burden of cultural, linguistic and social bias that may occur in instructional materials. As a result, teachers in the district are better equipped to identify and respond to such bias.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- ◆ public school teachers
- ◆ parents
- ◆ administrators
- ◆ other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- ◆ training and technical assistance
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- ◆ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710.

# Equity and Adequacy Concepts as Considered in School Finance Court Cases

by Albert H. Kauffman

The Texas Supreme Court has sent the Texas school finance case back to trial to consider the suitability, adequacy and equity of the Texas school finance system. From its filing in 1984, the Texas case has generally been seen as an “equity” case. The trial set for July 2004 is generally seen as an “adequacy” case.

This article clarifies the differences and overlaps of these two legal theories. A later article will focus on the probable effect of application of the adequacy concept on the Texas system, whether that adequacy system is implemented by the courts or by the legislature.

Court cases challenging state school finance systems are usually, though not with complete accuracy, classified as either “equity” or “adequacy” challenges. Of course, these cases are always impacted by the severity of the educational conditions in the state, the constitutional language and history in the state, and the political approaches of the judges.

## “Equity” Challenges to State School Finance Systems

The *equity* concept says that every school district should have the same resources to offer its students as every

other district in the state. These cases are usually based on the *equal protection* clauses in state constitutions, though some courts have deduced an equity principle from the state *education clauses*. The Texas school finance cases relied on the Texas constitution’s education clause *efficiency* requirement, but noted the clear linkage between efficiency and equity.

Issues of equity can either focus at the school district level or the student level. The first asks whether districts have the same resources at any particular level of effort by local taxpayers. The second asks whether students in each district have access to

the same level of funding, regardless of local effort.

The first major federal and state school finance cases, *Serrano vs. Priest* (1971) (*Serrano I*) and *San Antonio I.S.D. vs. Rodriguez* (1973) were equity cases, and a majority of the school cases before 1990 were equity cases.

One strength of the equity theory is the comparative ease of developing a judicially-enforceable standard of deciding whether the system is equitable and the comparative ease of explaining the situation to non-experts. There is also the possibility that the state can meet the standard without “carrot and

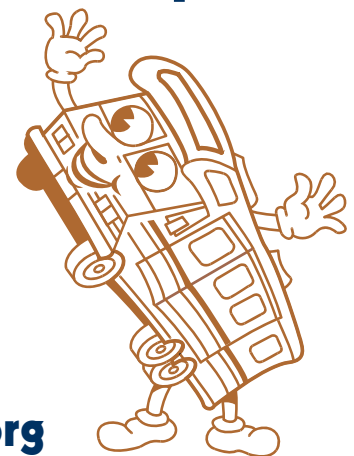
*Equity and Adequacy – continued on Page 8*

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*Equity and Adequacy – continued from Page 7*  
stick” problems.

On the other hand there may be a weakness of particular state-constitutional support for equity in state school finance systems. A system based on equity also must take measures to account for the very different costs of providing educational opportunity to different groups of students and districts.

### **“Adequacy” Challenges to State School Finance Systems**

The *adequacy* concept says that state constitutions require an educational system of a certain definable level of quality – or at least opportunity to obtain an education of that quality – for every student. These cases are usually based on the *education* clauses of state constitutions, though some courts have imported an adequacy standard into an equity case.

Some adequacy cases challenge the adequacy of the entire state education system, while others challenge the adequacy of the school finance system in some subset of the state’s districts or low wealth districts.

The first major adequacy case was the New Jersey litigation, *Robinson vs. Cahill*, and most of the school finance litigation since 1990 has been based on the adequacy theory.

A court challenge based on adequacy makes it possible to challenge the entire system of education. There is also flexibility to consider all the special costs of education in a certain district or subset of districts.

However, the adequacy theory faces the difficulty of setting judicially enforceable state standards for adequacy. States face difficulty in meeting an adequacy standard, given shifting educational theories and research on what constitutes real needs in education.

### **A Comparison of the “Equity” and “Adequacy” Theories**

Looking at models of systems that fit either, both or neither theory can highlight the differences between the equity and adequacy theories, and the natural overlap between the theories.

*Equitable, inadequate systems* – In one scenario, assume that \$10,000 per student per year is adequate funding. If each school district only has \$5,000 per student per year (regardless of tax effort), this would be a perfectly equitable system, but clearly an inadequate one.

### **If an equitable system is inadequately funded, all schools are equally vested in raising the level of support to an adequate level.**

*Adequate, inequitable systems* – In another scenario, again assume that \$10,000 per student is adequate funding. If some districts have \$15,000 per student while others have only \$10,000, the system would at first blush be considered adequate, but certainly not equitable.

This inequity would be exacerbated if the districts with greater per student funding had lower tax rates, or the districts with the least funding had long histories of inadequate funding. In effect, such a system would change the original definition of adequacy at \$10,000 per student. The district with \$15,000 per student would completely control the market for teachers (by offering up to twice as much for teacher salaries and benefits), and the district with \$10,000 per student would find it almost impossible to attract and retain teachers.

*Inadequate, inequitable systems* – In a final scenario where \$10,000 per student is considered adequate, if

some districts have \$8,000 per student and others have \$5,000, the system would be both inequitable and inadequate. Unfortunately, this is the example most like existing school finance systems.

### **A Closer Look at Adequacy Cases**

Texas is quite familiar with the development of equity cases. Adequacy cases bring up new issues. First is the trouble of coming up with the proper definition of an adequate system, consistent with the state constitutional history and interpretations, and with modern needs.

The adequacy case courts have also wrestled with the relationship between the court and the legislature. The general legal rule is that courts will determine the constitutionality of a statute or government system, but give the government body, in the first instance, the power to fulfill the constitutional standard by passing new or modified legislation.

When the governmental body does not respond appropriately, the case can become a political hot potato causing a severe strain between the branches of government, and public anger at both branches of government. Courts seek to avoid this quandary by treating the legislative body with deference, yet simultaneously protecting their own jurisdiction. State courts cannot force the state legislature to pass new taxes, so their power is indeed quite limited.

Adequacy cases go beyond the equity cases and look at the actual quality of the educational system and its real effects on students. Nevertheless, courts often rely on comparisons to other districts to hold that the offerings of the state are sufficient or insufficient.

The adequacy cases also must consider whether the state must offer the opportunity to each child to receive

*Equity and Adequacy – continued on Page 9*



# Education Equity vs. Education Adequacy

**Equity:** \Eq"ui\*ty\", n. fairness

**Adequacy:** \Ad"e\*qua\*cy\", n. the minimum amount to be sufficient

## Education Equity

For many years in Texas, there were huge differences in the amount of money available to educate children in public schools. Before 1995, some of the wealthiest school systems spent \$10,000 per student and had low school tax rates. Poorer school systems often had as little as \$3,000 per pupil and had much higher taxes.

“**Equity**,” or an **equitable system**, means that all communities – whether rich or poor – are taxed at a similar rate and have equal access to similar amounts of revenue per student.

**Equity is not the same as equality**; it **does not mean** that every school district gets the same amount of funding. Some schools need additional funding to serve students with disabilities, to provide bilingual education, and to provide free and reduced-price lunches. In a truly equitable system, every school district has enough funding to provide a quality education to all of its students.

## Why Fight for Equity?

Just as we insist that Texas have a quality highway throughout the state so that all Texans can travel easily and safely from north to south, so we believe that schools should

have the resources to serve all students, to build the skills and capacities they need to reach any destination. Much of the improvements in Texas schools in recent years is due to our equitable funding system.

## Education Adequacy

### What is adequacy?

Since the late 1980s, the issue of equity has taken a back seat to the topic of finance adequacy. Unlike the equity debate – which focuses on the disparity in funding between districts – the adequacy debate focuses on defining a **minimum level of funding** needed for every school to teach its students.

**“We need to be willing to look at the big picture of what it really means to properly – and not merely adequately – educate our children.”**

**– Donna Howard**

### Why does adequate set the bar too low?

The problem with adequacy is that it provides for education that is “**just enough**” rather than **excellent**. We have to ask ourselves, if we had adequate education, wouldn’t we have adequate, not excellent, employees? Wouldn’t we have adequate, not engaged citizens? Wouldn’t we have adequate, not excellent, opportunities for our children to go to college?

All children deserve the best possible education, adequacy for some and excellence for others is, by its very nature, discriminatory.

**[www.texans4fairfunding.org](http://www.texans4fairfunding.org)**

Source: Texans For Fair Funding Web Site, 2004

*Equity and Adequacy – continued from Page 8*  
an adequate education, or ensure that in fact all children did receive an adequate education. This difference is often described as a focus on either the inputs into the system or the outputs of the system.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, it is too early to tell if the new findings of inadequacy in some state cases will in fact lead to significantly greater funding. As the courts become impatient with stubborn legislatures, legislatures will become increasingly impatient with courts that continually say “not enough.” Legislators will argue that the legislatures, not the courts, must pass unpopular and often politically suicidal

tax increases, and therefore they should make the decisions that force them to raise taxes.

In an ideal context, states would support a school finance system that provides sufficient funds to ensure that all students in all schools have access to high quality schooling, while at the same time ensuring that all students and all schools have access to equitable financial resources at whatever levels of per pupil expenditures are permitted (if supplemental local funding is allowed).

Absent this combination of both equity and adequacy, it is preferable that equity be given priority. If an equitable system is inadequately funded, all schools are equally vested in raising the level of support to an adequate level. Conversely, if a system

is “adequately” funded but inequitable, no similar shared basis for improvement in equity exists.

In December 2003, a Kansas state district court declared that state’s school finance system unconstitutional on both adequacy and equity bases. The court concluded: “This case is not about the legislature, it is not about the governor, it is not about the court, it is not about the state school board, it is not about school districts, counties, cities, or towns. It is about our children!”

The absolute importance of these issues demands that we all continue to study and participate in these processes.

Albert Kauffman is the senior legal policy and advocacy associate at the Civil Rights Project, Harvard University. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).

# 11th Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño*

Early Childhood Educators Institute™

San Antonio, Texas

April 20-22, 2004



The 11th Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development concurrent sessions that are customized to value and capitalize on the linguistic and cultural assets brought forth by a diverse student population.

This year's event will focus on **building reading concepts and skills of young English language learners**. Topics include: literacy, technology, social development, curriculum and policy.

- **Visit model early childhood centers.** These visits provide you with the opportunity to share ideas while seeing them in action. You will travel to high-performing, high-minority sites in the San Antonio area that are working effectively with diverse learners.
- **Interact with parents** to discuss ideas to form effective learning partnerships.
- **Learn in workshops** on successful bilingual programs, Spanish literacy, pedagogy and curriculum, policy and curriculum.

The action-packed schedule begins at 8:00 a.m. each morning and continues through 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday, and 2:30 p.m. on Thursday. The institute includes luncheon sessions on Tuesday and Thursday.

## Special Activity

### **Parent Leadership Institute, Thursday, April 22**

This one-day event will concentrate on the challenges in early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. Parents and educators will share ways to focus their leadership to enhance early childhood learning.

## Institute Sponsors

The Intercultural Development Research Association is pleased to bring you this 11th Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Supporting IDRA projects include:

- IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas).
- Texas IDRA PIRC (the parent information resource center).
- Project READ (IDRA's project establishing preschool center classrooms of excellence that collectively form a center of excellence ensuring reading, cognitive, and emotional success for all preschool children).
- STAR Center (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation).

Each of these IDRA projects provides specialized training and technical assistance to schools. Information on how your campus can use these resources to improve instruction and assessment will be available at the institute, by calling IDRA at 210-444-1710, or by visiting IDRA's web site: [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org).

Contact IDRA (210-444-1710) or visit the IDRA web site ([www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)) for details and to register online.



# Registration Form



(Please use one form per person. Feel free to make copies of this form.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Campus \_\_\_\_\_  
School or Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed      Check or PO# \_\_\_\_\_

## Registration Fees

### Early Bird Registration Fees – Before April 2

- \_\_\_ \$175 institute registration, April 20-22, 2004\*
- \_\_\_ \$15 parent institute registration (if a parent and not an education professional), April 22, 2004
- \_\_\_ \$60 parent institute registration (if an education professional), April 22, 2004

### Registration Fees – After April 2

- \_\_\_ \$195 institute registration, April 20-22, 2004\*
- \_\_\_ \$15 parent institute registration (if a parent and not an education professional), April 22, 2004
- \_\_\_ \$70 parent institute registration (if an education professional), April 22, 2004

\* Includes institute sessions, Tuesday and Thursday luncheons, two school visits [for first paid registrants], and materials.

Make checks payable to: Intercultural Development Research Association. Purchase order numbers may be used to reserve space. Full payment prior to the institute is expected.

Register **Online** with a purchase order number at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)

**Mail** with a check or purchase order to IDRA at 5835 Callaghan Road, #350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190, Attention: Carol Chávez

**Fax** with a purchase order to IDRA at 210-444-1714, Attention: Carol Chávez

## Hotel Information

The institute will be held at the San Antonio Airport Hilton Hotel. The hotel is offering a special rate of \$101 per night for a single or double room (plus state and local taxes), based on availability. The hotel reservation deadline for the reduced rate is April 9, 2004. Call 1-800-445-8667 to make reservations. Be sure to reference the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute in order to qualify for the special rate.



INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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*La Semana del Niño – continued from Page 2*

working with young children watch with anticipation the developmental milestones indicating a child is picking up the skills expected at a certain age.

In the first year of life, the focus is typically on motor skills. In the second year attention shifts to language development (Shiver, 2001). It is interesting to see parents and teachers interacting and learning from each other.

A powerful feature of the IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute is the parent conference component. This full-day event concentrates on the challenges in early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. Parents and educators share ways to focus their leadership to enhance early childhood learning.

This professional development

experience enhances early childhood educators' professional skills and gives the participants an opportunity to network with colleagues and other experts.

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual institute is being held in San Antonio on April 20-22, 2004 (see Pages 10 and 11 for details).

For 30 years, IDRA has been on the cutting-edge of current knowledge and research and was visionary when the first IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute was held 11 years ago.

### Resources

U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Projections of the Population by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States; 1999 to 2100 (Middle Series)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Current Population Survey, Table 7.1*

*Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over by Sex, Hispanic Origin, and Race: March 2002* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002).

Shiver, E. "Brain Development and Mastery of Language in the Early Childhood Years," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 2001).

Mandel Morrow, L. *Literacy Development In The Early Years: Helping Children Read and Write* (4th ed.) (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 2001).

National Center for Education Statistics. *The Condition of Education, 2003, Special Analysis of Readyng – Young Children's Achievement and Classroom Experiences* (Washington, D.C.: NCES, 2003).

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José Rodríguez is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).



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