



# GRADUATION FOR ALL

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## Early Learning • [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) • September 2010

Though we sometimes still view it as a sudden, spur-of-the-moment decision, more and more research confirms that dropping out does not happen overnight. It is almost always the result of a long process. "The dropout problem is not one that can be addressed exclusively at the middle or high school levels--note researchers at the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network--"by then it is too late for some students." And for this reason, early literacy development and early childhood education figure prominently in NDPC/N's [Effective Strategies for Increasing Graduation Rates](#).

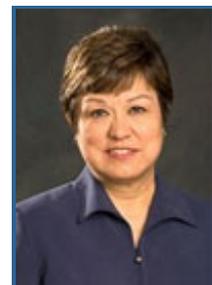
Preparing children to be strong readers is crucial. But, as a 2010 Kids Count special report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation points out, 67 percent of all children and 85 percent of children from low-income families who attend high-poverty schools are [not prepared to meet "proficiency" standards](#) on NAEP fourth grade reading tests.

This fall issue of Graduation for All offers new resources to support your work in promoting educational excellence and equity, from children's earliest years. As always, we welcome your comments, questions and input at [gradforall@idra.org](mailto:gradforall@idra.org).

[¡Usted puede recibir esta edición de Graduation for All en español!](#)

## Schools and Communities in Action

**Science from the Start, with Dr. Rosalinda Barrera.** At a presentation delivered to the Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Early Childhood Educators Institute, Dr. Rosalinda Barrera, then dean of the College of Education at Texas State University in San Marcos, drew a vivid picture of the need for schools to actively integrate science instruction into the earliest grades for second language learners. In this podcast, Dr. Barrera, who this summer became Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), calls for more focused attention on science in the early years, both to inspire future scientists, and to engage vibrant language learning and discovery.



[Science in Early Childhood Bilingual Classrooms with Dr. Rosalinda Barrera.](#)

You may also want to see [Science in the Preschool Classroom: Capitalizing on Children's Fascination with the Everyday World to Foster Language and Literacy Development](#) by Kathleen Conezio and Lucia French.

**Wormology.** For more on science learning in elementary classrooms, visit the wormologists at Newsome Park Elementary School (in Newport News, Virginia), where math, writing, reading and other subjects are woven into students' projects. See: [From Worms to Wall Street: Projects Prompt Active, Authentic Learning](#) (video) by Edutopia.

**Did you know?** The State of America's Children 2010, by the Children's Defense Fund considers where we are as a nation in caring for all children. Here are three quick facts from CDF's report on early childhood development.

- Thirty eight states had state-funded prekindergarten programs but served only 25.4 percent of 4-year-olds and 3.7 percent of 3-year-olds.
- In 36 states and DC, center-based child care for a 4-year old costs more than annual in-state tuition at a public four-year college.
- In 20 states, a family must have an income of 175 percent below the poverty level to qualify for a public child care subsidy.

[For the full report.](#)

**Partnerships and the Power of Mutual Respect.** Recognizing that the best family-school partnerships reflect consistent, reciprocal, respectful relationships, and two-way communication, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) named ten programs around the country as exemplary in family engagement. From the Montgomery County Community College Children's Center in Blue Bell, PA to Sheltering Arms Early Education & Family Center in Atlanta, these programs created a foundation for partnership through consistent communication, valuing family involvement in decision-making, and the reciprocal exchange of knowledge. And, they created a context for ongoing support and development of teachers and program leaders.

- To learn more about [NAEYC's Engaging Diverse Families initiative](#).
- To visit NAEYC's summary of recent [literature on family engagement](#).

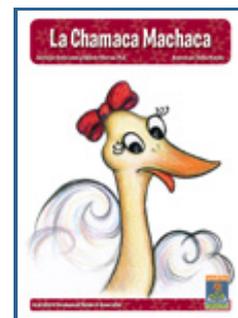
**Pre-School Readiness and Parent Partnership.** Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters is a three-year parent involvement and school readiness program in which learning and play go hand-in-hand. In this Classnotes podcast, Ms. Frances Guzmán, M.Ed., describes how HIPPY, a long-time partner of IDRA's Texas PIRC, is preparing young children for the classroom and strengthening connections between parents and their children's school.

[To hear the "Supporting Parents of Preschoolers" podcast.](#)

- To learn more about [Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters](#).
- For a March, 2009 summary of [evaluation research on HIPPY's programs](#).

## Toolbox

***New this Fall!* Semillitas de Aprendizaje and Cartitas ("Seedlings" and "Letters Home" series).** Semillitas de Aprendizaje is a new series that stems from research IDRA has conducted on its Reading Early for Academic Development (READ) project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. READ preschool centers establish "classrooms of excellence" that ensure reading, cognitive and emotional success for all preschool children through a print-rich environment with appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities.



The Semillitas series includes...

- **Big Books and Small Readers.** (Spanish, English) A set of ten beautifully-illustrated stories, based on the art of storytelling and designed for literacy development with culturally-relevant materials for 3- and 4-year-old children.
- **Cartitas Series - Letters Home with Activity Cards** (Spanish, English) - A set of 10 letters for teachers to send home for parents. Each card has activities related the big book/small reader titles above.
- **Preschool Math and Self Concept Books** (Spanish, English) - A set of 15 small books for classroom use and for parents to use with their children at home. The books feature photos of farm animals and focus on numeracy, science and social-emotional development.

To learn more about Semillitas de aprendizaje and to place orders for the series, visit: [www.idra.org/Quality\\_Early\\_Education/Semillitas/](http://www.idra.org/Quality_Early_Education/Semillitas/)

## Youth Voices

*"I saw all these numbers at the carnival!"* - pre-kindergartener, "Giving New Jobs to Numbers," inspired by the story El Viejo Reloj.

**Children's Literature and Critical Thought.** Children's literature can capture children's hearts and engage creative and critical thought. These ideas are explored in a podcast conversation with Dr. Juanita García, who uses children's literature to encourage students to read deeply, analyze, question and make associations with the stories. To hear the IDRA Classnotes podcast, visit [Building Critical Thought through Children's Literature](#).

To see samples of how children gave new jobs to numbers, inspired by a critical and creative reading of "El Viejo Reloj," see:

- [Kindergarteners give new jobs to numbers](#)
- [Third graders give new jobs to numbers](#)

- [Seventh and eighth graders give new jobs to numbers](#)

The [Intercultural Development Research Association](#) is an independent, private non-profit organization whose mission is to create schools that work for all children.

**Let us hear from you!** Have a story of school-community partnership that's raising graduation rates? We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions at [gradforall@idra.org](mailto:gradforall@idra.org).

**Forward to a Friend!** Feel free to [share Grad4All](#) with anyone who shares your passion for every student's success.

Thanks for reading!

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