



NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October, 10 2000

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More Families Reading or Telling Stories to Children

Percentage of Parents Reading and Telling Stories to their Children Regularly is on the Rise

(Washington, D.C.) – More families are reading or telling stories to their children on a regular basis, according to the National Education Goals Panel. In 1999, 69 percent of children aged three to five were read to or told stories regularly by a parent. This is an increase over 1993 when 66 percent of children were read to or told stories regularly. This activity is one of four national indicators the Goals Panel uses to report progress toward Goal One; that all children start school ready to learn.

“Interactive literacy activities between parents and children are crucial for making better students,” said Governor Tommy Thompson (R-WI) chair of the Goals Panel. “We are very excited by this improvement, clearly parents are getting the message that they can have a positive impact on their children in a way that is fun and easy.”

Many educational organizations and researchers feel that there is a direct link between storytelling to young children and their success in reading later on. The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) is one of them, headed by Sharon Darling, its president and founder. NCFL is in its 11th year and has been at the forefront of efforts to give parents the tools they need to be their child’s first and best teachers. Their research points out that students who are read to showed dynamic improvements in the classroom.

“We know that parents have the greatest influence on their child’s development and when they are involved in their child’s education, the child becomes a better student,” said Darling during her presentation at the recent Goals Panel field hearing in Atlanta, GA.

In addition, the connection between story telling and reading and improved academic performance was highlighted in a recent article in the October issue of *Instructor* titled “Let the words work their Magic”. It stated that the single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children, which supports the school readiness correlation to reading aloud.

About the National Education Goals Panel

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body of federal and state officials comprised of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators and two members appointed by the President. The eight National Education Goals call for greater levels of student achievement and citizenship; increased rates of high school graduation; higher levels of adult literacy; and safe, disciplined, and alcohol-and-drug free schools. The Goals also call for all children to be ready to learn by the time they start school and for US students to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement by the year 2000.

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