Message From Our Executive Director -
We Are Grateful For Your Support!

Happy Holidays!

It was great to see so many of you at our "Simple Interactions" School Readiness Symposium. The positive feedback from the participants and the presenters confirmed to me that these events are time well spent. I believe that the Symposia bring us together to learn something new, connect with others doing the important work of getting our youngest learners off to a positive start, and challenge ourselves to ensure that every child in Maryland has the foundational skills needed for success in school, career and life.

Ready At Five recently completed a strategic planning process focused on the next three years. We heard from you during that process and took your ideas, suggestions and cautions to heart. While we will be more formally rolling out our plan, I wanted to share that Ready At Five will be working toward three goals: 1) Parents and Families
are confident in their role as their child's first teacher; 2) Early Care and Education professionals have the skills they need to deliver high quality learning experiences to all children in their community and 3) Maryland and its communities will value and invest in high quality early care and education for all of our children. I know, it shouldn't take three years, right? Piece of cake, right? But we wanted to challenge ourselves, to clearly identify where we want to be so that we can focus on how to get there. Over the next several months, you'll see some new content from us, including building on the strengths of the Learning Party model, you'll hear from us when we reach out to you in the field to find out what questions you need answered, and we will continue to offer opportunities to connect with people that are making a difference in the lives of children in Maryland.

We know there is much work to be done, and it can't be done in a vacuum. We will continue to strengthen our existing partnerships, as we build new ones to expand our reach. Please consider making a donation to support Ready At Five in honor of someone that you know that is making a difference in the life of a child and we pledge to be here to energize and inspire you for years to come!

You Can Still Buy A Bag Until the End of December!

We are so excited to share that Ready At Five has been selected to be a part of the Giant Food Community Bag Program, which is designed to make it easy for customers to contribute to their local community while supporting the environment.

For the month of December, each time a reusable $2.50 Community Bag is purchased at the Giant Food located at 6020 Marshalee Drive in Elkridge MD, $1 will be donated to Ready At Five! This is a great way to raise awareness, support the environment and fundraise for our cause.

Please help us by spreading the news to your friends and family. Call, send emails, and post on social media. The more people who learn about the program and purchase the Community Bag during the month of December, the more money we will raise.

To learn more about this program, please visit giantfood.bags4mycause.com
Ready At Five's School Readiness Symposium
"Simple Interactions" a Success

Thank you to all of our sponsors, speakers and attendees who took part in the December 11th School Readiness Symposium at Turf Valley Conference Center. Over 350 guests were in attendance as Junlei Li, Ph.D., Saul Zentz Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education and Dana Winters, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Child & Family Studies and Director of Simple Interactions & Academic Programs, Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College delivered the keynote address on "Looking for Helpers, Finding Hope." After a lunch time presentation by Steven Hicks, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education, participants had their choice of afternoon workshops. Please visit our website to see the presentations from the enriching day. If you attended and have not filled out the survey yet, there is still time! https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RA5Symp2019

(Save the date for May 13, 2020 when Alvin Irby, MS, MPA, former kindergarten teacher turned award-winning social entrepreneur, speaker, comedian and author and founder of Barbershop Books will be our Keynote Speaker)!
The Governor's Office for Children and Children's Cabinet, in partnership with the Banneker-Douglass Museum Foundation and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, offer the Governor's Young Readers Program to the residents of Baltimore City. Through this program, children from birth through their 5th birthday are mailed a free book each month regardless of family income. Please visit https://goc.maryland.gov/youngreaders to
December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month

The holiday season is upon us with friends and family celebrating together, so let's welcome in the holidays and New Year safely and choose safe toys and age-appropriate gifts for children.

Safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season:

**Balloons**
Children can choke or suffocate on deflated or broken balloons. Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than eight years old. Discard broken balloons immediately.

**Small balls and other toys with small parts**
For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.

**Scooters and other riding toys**
Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast, and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be worn properly at all times and they should be sized to fit.

**Magnets**
High-powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children. Whether marketed for children or adults, building and play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.

Once gifts are open:

- Immediately discard plastic wrapping or other toy packaging before the wrapping and packaging become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings.
Battery charging should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children. Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any mechanism to prevent overcharging.

Our Executive Director Keri Hyde enjoyed her time reading *Thank You Omu!* and handing out books to our young friends at Busy Bee's Child Care Center in Baltimore City in November to celebrate Read for the Record Day! Jumpstart's Read for the Record brings together millions of adults and children around the world each year to read the same book on the same day in order to raise awareness about the critical importance of early literacy.
Did You Know? Title 1 Funds Can Be Used to Meet the Requirements for Family Engagement Including Ready At Five’s Learning Parties!

Title I, Part A is contained in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. This legislation reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I, Part A is a federal program that provides financial assistance to local school systems and schools with high percentages of poor children to support the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. All twenty-four local education agencies in Maryland receive Title I funds. These funds provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to help low-achieving children who attend Title I schools master challenging curricula and meet state standards. Title I funds support extra instruction in reading and mathematics, additional teachers, materials of instruction, as well as after-school and summer programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum.

Learning Parties are interactive, hands-on, parent/child parties that promote young children's development of school readiness skills. Based on the belief that parents are their child’s first teacher, Learning Parties teach parents how to make everyday moments learning moments through playing, singing, talking, reading, and engaging in fun activities. Originally developed by Children's Resources International and modified by Ready At Five, the Learning Party curricula support the seven domains of learning: Language & Literacy, Math, Science, Social Foundations, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Social Studies and Fine Arts, in addition to the Parent Leadership Learning Party which was developed in collaboration with experts at EPIC (Every Person Influences Children). Parent Leadership Learning Party materials were developed with Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood, as part of the Family Engagement Initiative, funded through a grant opportunity with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Look for more Learning Parties Coming Soon!
Featured Resources

Ready At Five Has What You're Looking For - School Readiness Publications!

Please click here for the order form or visit our website to find out about the programs and resources that we offer.

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Help us as we work to ensure that all children in Maryland have the foundational skills needed for future success in school, career and life.

Ready At Five is a self-sustaining program of the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT), and does not receive funding from the MBRT. One-time or monthly donations of $100 or more are sought and gratefully accepted to expand Ready At Five’s impact. To contribute this; or any, amount click here

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