



2005 Distinguished Performance Award

In recognition of exceptional work to improve school readiness.

The **Baltimore Leadership in Action Program** (B-LAP) began its work in September 2003 supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Family League of Baltimore City and the Reason to Believe Enterprise.

B-LAP is committed to achieving school readiness for generations of Baltimore's families. For the past 18 months, over 50 community leaders, public officials, parents and early childhood care and education providers came together as a leadership body to define a school readiness agenda for Baltimore City's 42,000 children birth to age 5.

B-LAP's overarching goal is to increase the percentage of Baltimore City kindergartners assessed as fully ready for success in school to 52% or better. This figure represents a five-percentage point gain each year for the next five years.

To improve school readiness scores, B-LAP developed a Five-Year Action Plan, which includes seven key goals:

1. All children, birth to age five, will have access to quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of families, including full-day options.
2. Parents of young children will succeed in their role as their child's first teacher.
3. Children, birth to age five, and their families will receive necessary income support benefits and health and mental health care to ensure they arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies.
4. All early care and education staff will be appropriately trained in promoting and understanding school readiness.
5. All Baltimore citizens will understand the value of quality early care and education as a means to achieve school readiness.
6. Baltimore will have an infrastructure that promotes, sufficiently funds, and holds accountable its school readiness efforts.
7. Baltimore City schools will be prepared to receive all children.

B-LAP achieved significant initial steps toward achieving its goals, including:

- Developing and distributing 7,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten registration packets to encourage early school registration;
- Improving teacher training on the administration of school readiness assessments;
- Providing quality children's books and literacy training to home visitors and family providers; and
- Launching the *Countdown to Kindergarten-Baltimore* public engagement campaign to raise awareness about the importance of school readiness and to provide parents and caregivers with information.

Ready At Five commends the Baltimore Leadership in Action members for their outstanding commitment to Baltimore City's young children. B-LAP is making a measurable difference in improving the school readiness of the city's children.