



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Partnership receives 20K software donation from IBM to improve bi-lingual communication between parents and More at Four teachers

IBM software will enable Spanish-speaking families to engage in their young children's education

Durham – Durham's Partnership for Children, a Smart Start Initiative, announced Thursday that IBM has selected the organization to participate in its automatic translation program, **iTraduceloAhora!**[™] (Translate Now). IBM provided a \$20,000 grant donation to the Partnership and it's More at Four pre-kindergarten providers to enable them to have enhanced ability to communicate with the Spanish-speaking families they serve.

"Communication is the foundation of parent involvement and engaging parents in their children's development is a critical aspect of Durham's More at Four Program," says Marsha Basloe, executive director of Durham's Partnership for Children. "When parents can communicate with their children's teachers, they feel respected and connected to their child's educational system. This will be an extraordinary move forward for a previously disenfranchised group of parents."

The research on the benefits of parental involvement in their child's education, particularly in the early school years, helped reinforce the IBM grant donation.

"IBM understands that quality early childhood education has a significant impact on children's success in school from kindergarten through graduation and beyond," says Tina Wilson, manager of IBM's Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs. "The successful continuum of children's education is also greatly impacted by the degree of parental involvement in their learning."

Studies show that parent involvement is critical in the early years and when parents make a bond with the child's education system from the start. Studies show that parent involvement skills learned during the early years enables parents, especially those who are socio-economically challenged, to continue involvement over the course of their child's educational experience. This bond is difficult to make if the educators and the parents are unable to effectively communicate.

With the iTraducelo Ahora! grant program, IBM is helping bridge the language divide for Hispanics. iTraducelo Ahora! uses IBM WebSphere Translation Server software, which translates emails automatically from English to Spanish and vice versa to help Spanish-speaking parents better communicate with their children's English-speaking teachers. In addition to the email translations, the software also translates Web sites from English to Spanish, opening up a world of information for Spanish speakers. Currently, more than 4,200 users in nearly 600 schools and nonprofit organizations in seven countries are using this free software.

Through iTraduceloAhora! non-Spanish speaking educators will be able to communicate fluently with the child's Spanish-speaking parents.

Currently more than 400 4-year-olds are served in a total of 29 sites in private child care centers, Durham Public Schools and Head Start facilities. The **iTraduceloAhora!**[™] (**Translate Now**) technology will

enable classroom to various organizations fully incorporate Spanish-speaking parents into the lives of their children's education.

About Durham's Partnership for Children

Durham's Partnership for Children celebrates 15 years making young children a priority. Founded in 1994 and first funded in 1995 to administer the Smart Start grant in Durham County, the Partnership works as an independent, local nonprofit that serves young children birth to age 5 and their families under North Carolina's nationally recognized initiative to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For 15 years, the Partnership has helped working parents pay for child care, improve the quality of child care and provided health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership works to achieve its mission: *To mobilize and unify the Durham community to create and support innovative and successful approaches to serving the needs of children birth to age 5 and their families*, by working with funded partners, groups and organizations in Durham County to support and coordinate efforts impacting young children and their families. The Partnership also administers the More at Four Program in Durham County serving more than 400 children and the new Early Head Start Grant which will serve 120 Durham infants and toddlers beginning May 2010. For more information about the Partnership, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext 221.

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