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EDUCATION AND HEALTH LEADERS LAUNCH WEBSITE PROVIDING RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF MINNESOTA NEWBORNS

*~ MNParentsKnow.info developed as part of the Educate Parents Partnership, an
initiative of Governor Tim Pawlenty ~*

Saint Paul –Education Commissioner Alice Seagren today, along with members of the Legislature’s early childhood caucus and leaders in early childhood health and education, announced the launch of MNParentsKnow.info, a Website offering Minnesota parents a convenient source for trusted knowledge on their child’s health, learning, development and safety.

“Minnesota is committed to supporting parents as their child's first and most important teacher from newborn all the way through high school,” said Governor Tim Pawlenty. “Trusted information for parents will help them to help their children, and that helps Minnesota.”

“Through partnerships with health and education leaders throughout the state, we are pleased to launch this interactive tool for parents,” Seagren said. “Minnesota ParentsKnow is tailored for Minnesota parents and provides them with knowledge to make informed decisions as their children grow.”

MNParentsKnow.info is hosted by the Minnesota Department of Education and was developed as part of the Educate Parents Partnership, an early childhood initiative of Governor Tim Pawlenty funded by the 2006 Legislature. The Website was developed by the Minnesota Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Health, Department of Human Services and many other public and private organizations.

In order to determine what would be most useful for Minnesota parents, 1,300 parents were surveyed. Nine focus groups were also conducted with parents of different ages and ethnic backgrounds to ensure the Website would be helpful to all Minnesota parents.

The Website is designed to provide tools to meet specific needs and concerns of parents related to child development, learning and health. The site is currently focused on newborn children, but development plans include expansion through grade 12.

MNParentsKnow.info includes extensive interactive media, including more than 75 short videos (1-5 minutes), public service announcements and podcasts on child development, learning and health. Other resources parents will find on MNParentsKnow.info include:

A-Z Parenting Topics: consumer safety information, health, development and learning information in various formats such as video, audio and printable materials.

Developmental Milestones: child development milestones that reflect typical child development including tips parents can use to support their child’s development.

Smart Searching and Web Guide: tips for successful Web searching developed in partnership with Tufts University, designed to help parents evaluate the trustworthiness of Web search results. A customized Google search for parent and child health and development topics provides search results to sites rated as high-quality by child development experts at Tufts University.

Find a Program: an interactive search tool for publicly funded early childhood programs organized by county. This section includes a link to the child care search on the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network Website.

Everyday Parent to Parent: moderated bulletin board in which parents can share their ideas about child development issues and strategies.

The Department of Education will be working with several partners to bring this resource to the attention of Minnesota parents. To date our partners include:

- Association of Minnesota Counties
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation
- Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
- Early Childhood Caucus
- Emergency and Community Health Outreach
- Greater Twin Cities United Way
- HealthPartners
- March of Dimes – Minnesota Chapter
- Medica
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Hospital Association
- Minnesota National Guard
- Minnesota Parent Center
- MNParent Magazine
- New York University Child Study Center
- Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER)
- Talaris Research Institute
- Tufts University
- UCare Minnesota
- University of Michigan Health System
- University of Minnesota

The Minnesota ParentsKnow Website is available at <http://MNParentsKnow.info>.