

How Your Company Can Help Parents Engage With Their Young Children



Acknowledgements

ReadyNation is the nation's preeminent business leader organization working to strengthen business through effective policies for children and youth. It operates under the umbrella of the non-profit Council For A Strong America. Our more than 1,400 worldwide members educate policymakers and the public about effective investments that will help businesses compete in today's global marketplace by helping children get on the right track to succeed in school and in life. Find out more at www.ReadyNation.org.

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Introduction

This Employer Brief offers practical, field-tested tips and tools for business leaders on how to help parents in their companies and communities better nurture, educate, and engage young children. By taking even the first steps in this effort, every business executive can make an incremental contribution to the well-being of their community by impacting young children and families in one workplace, town, or city at a time. Collectively, this interactive form of corporate leadership has the power to dramatically affect our societies and make a difference for businesses and their communities.¹

To help business leaders implement such a program, this brief provides a roadmap for actions you can take within your communities, or across even larger regions, to support parents as they nurture, educate, and engage with their young children. Here you will find answers to basic questions: How do I decide where to start? How do I define my goals? How do I build support for my effort within my company and beyond, and how do I evaluate my efforts? This information will help corporate decision-makers access a wide array of free resources, connect you to



partners in your community, and learn about best-practice examples from business peers.

The information is designed to support employers of all sizes, in different sectors, and in a variety of settings and countries, take action to help parents both within and beyond their companies start their young children on the path to life success.

Making It Work: Helping Employers Decide, Persuade, Implement, Evaluate

Employers interested in supporting early childhood initiatives can take many actions; below is step-by-step guidance to help design, persuade, implement, and evaluate your efforts.

The Process of Deciding: What Are My Goals?

The following questions comprise an informal “needs assessment” that can help you frame your key objectives and ensure they are both realistic and aligned with your corporate mission. Consider whether your goals include:

- Recruiting exceptional new employees and/or retaining our best talent
- Reducing absenteeism and turnover that result from employees’ work-life conflicts
- Increasing productivity and reducing presenteeism, while enhancing employee engagement and morale
- Building the workforce and customer base of the future
- Improving the quality of life in our community
- Enhancing the company’s reputation internally and externally

What supports do our employees and/or the broader community need most?

- Ask your Human Resources department if employees have expressed interest or concern with any specific parenting issues
- Host a focus group for employees to discuss ideas for parental engagement

supports (*note that asking employees what they want can imply a commitment to follow up, so it needs to be undertaken carefully*)

- Seek out and confer with community leaders and community partner organizations
- Look at any formal state, county or city early childhood plans that highlight key issues and community needs.

“Companies are taking direct steps to help their employees and their families. Crayola in the U.S. has a major program to teach employees the importance of nurturing their young children along with practical tips on how to do so. Safaricom Limited, an African communications company, offers a range of supports for mothers in the workplace, including a free child day-care center, with an on-site doctor and breastfeeding room.”

— Jack Brennan,
Chairman Emeritus and Senior Advisor,
Vanguard, and co-chair, ReadyNation CEO Task
Force on Early Childhood
and Sara Watson,
Global Director, ReadyNation

What level of resources are we willing to commit?

Not surprisingly, a company's size and available resources will dictate the approach and scale of its effort. Some initiatives require up-front financial investments and time commitments to realize long-term gains. Others can involve minimal cost and very little labor or staff time. Ask yourself how deep your engagement should be, and consider these related questions:

- What is our timeframe—and how quickly do we need to see results?
- How long will responsibilities for this program last?
- What size and scope do we want to tackle? An initiative housed in one office, or something that can be scaled across our entire company—nationally or even globally?

Similarly, what kinds of resources would be easiest and/or most effective for us to commit?

Think creatively about how to leverage your company's existing strengths and resources. Your support for early childhood or parenting initiatives can come in many shapes and sizes. Among the most common:

- Programs to engage employees in the community (like volunteer tutoring and mentoring programs, or volunteer projects with local schools or social service providers)
- Benefits and programs for employees (including child care programs, subsidies, or referrals; employee discounts for child care; and parent education seminars)
- In-kind contributions to support broader initiatives for children and



Presenteeism describes a broad range of circumstances that occur when employees are physically present, but due to a physical or emotional issue, are distracted to the point of reduced productivity.² Employees worried about their young children's well-being could fall into this category.

Case in Point

When **Vanguard**, the American investment company, decided to focus its philanthropic efforts to maximize their impact, its leadership undertook a rigorous internal research process to decide where to engage. Several worthy causes were measured against nine “decision criteria”:

- Degree of need and extent of the “problem” in the community -- locally, nationally, and potentially globally
- Opportunity to “use our voice” to influence and advocate for change.
- Opportunity to work effectively with other partners in the space.
- Potential to make meaningful and measurable progress in the focus area.
- Alignment with Vanguard’s mission and reputation.
- Vanguard credibility in the space.
- Potential for creating clear goals, measures and outcomes in the particular focus area.
- Crew interest and potential engagement in the selected focus area.
- CEO and leadership team alignment and support.

After careful review, the company chose early childhood education as its priority and has moved forward with strategic investments.

families (such as free meeting space, computers, product donation)

- Business expertise (which might include finance, training, technical assistance, or support for research and evaluation of a community initiative)
- Financial contributions

- Leadership (such as committing your company executives to a state or local early childhood coalition, a policy task force, a Governor’s commission, or other networks focused on issues impacting children and families)

Is there anything unique about our workforce and/or our status in the community that makes this work particularly meaningful?

- Whatever your core business mission may be, it’s likely to align with some critical need of children and families in the community. (If education or technology, think early literacy. If health care, think childhood wellness or immunization. If food services, think child nutrition.)
- At the same time, the particular characteristics, demographics and expertise of your workforce may suggest obvious areas of interest and issues where your engagement could have the greatest impact.

What results do we expect or hope to achieve?

- What would constitute success?
- What outcomes can we expect, and over what timeframe?
- Who will be influenced by the program? (Employees, community, company, etc.)
- Guard against the tendency to overpromise results. It’s important that your expectations are realistic and consistent with the scope and timing of your initiative.

The Process of Persuading: How Do We Build Support?

Building buy-in—from leadership and employees alike—will increase the odds of success and impact. Suggested steps include:

- **Identify internal champions.** Identify a leader or leaders within your company who will oversee your new efforts around childhood investment or parent engagement. A champion is often a company's high-level decision maker who can build support at the executive level and communicate the imperative from the top down. In smaller companies, the champion may be the owner or senior leader.
- **Rely on extensive 'best practice' evidence to make your case.** Businesses interested in starting an early childhood/parent engagement initiative should look to other companies already active in this arena for a clear and convincing body of success stories.
- **Emphasize your company's motivation.** To secure buy-in, make it clear why you are undertaking this effort in the first place. Rely on any internal company research findings or survey results around these issues to demonstrate what employees want and need as it relates to family supports. Bolster the argument with relevant facts and statistics about the challenges facing children and youth in your community.
- **Tailor your message: Business and social benefits.** If you're making your case internally, lead with the bottom-line business benefits you expect from your initiative. Then add the important and well-documented social benefits

Case in Point

Five years ago, **JetBlue** launched Soar with Reading, a program designed to encourage reading and get books into the hands of children who need them most. Inspired by research showing that kids in Anacostia—an underserved community in Washington, DC—have access to only one age-appropriate book for every 830 children, the company (with partner Random House) piloted its newest program in 2015: Colorful “vending machines”, dispensing free children's books at prominent locations in the community. Since Soar with Reading's inception, JetBlue and partners have donated over \$1,750,000 worth of books to kids in need. For more information, please see www.soarwithreading.com/pdfs/about-soarwithreading.pdf

- associated with investing in children and families, and the broader impact your initiative will likely have on your community and society in general.

The Process of Implementing: How Do We Achieve Our Goals?

The following pages address the key steps you can take to get your effort underway, or to build upon an existing commitment to supporting parents and children in your workforce and your community. The first few points are general and relevant no matter which area of child or family engagement you've decided to pursue. Subsequent points relate to specific initiatives including childcare, workplace flexibility, early literacy, breastfeeding, and tax credits to support families.

Partners are Key

Businesses that have effectively engaged in early childhood and related areas can attest: It's vital to work with community partners to manage key elements in order to help



customize your initiative to meet the needs of the community.

- Choose a partner who knows the field and the issues, but can also talk in plain

terms, listen to your perspective, and make recommendations that fit your company's goals.

- In the parental engagement and early childhood education space, potential partners include home visiting programs, preschool and elementary education providers, advocacy organizations, faith-based social service groups, and policy and academic experts.
- In the children and family arena more generally, libraries, museums, and even sports teams can be logical and valuable partners for your efforts. In many communities, the United Way is a leading partner for business efforts to support youth.

Case in Point

When **KPMG** decided to pursue early literacy, it chose to test-drive its *Family for Literacy* program in six pilot offices. Based on initial success and lessons learned, the commitment quickly grew. Within five years, Family for Literacy was established in 90 of the company's offices worldwide and had provided more than 2 million new books to low-income children in communities across America. For a detailed case study, see www.readynation.org/ready2go-projects/kpmgs-family-for-literacy/.

Case in Point

H-E-B, the supermarket chain with stores in Texas and Mexico, pioneered its *“Read 3” Literacy Initiative* to educate parents and caregivers about the need to read to their children at least 3 times each week. As the program has grown, H-E-B has developed a three-pronged evaluation to gauge success.

- **“In-Store Experiences”** are assessed by the growing number of kids and families who participate in regular literacy events it hosts at its markets.
- **“Community Outreach”** is measured by before- and after- surveys of families taking part in H-E-B’s Family Literacy Workshops. Parent interviews indicate that behaviors in the home around literacy, language, and nutrition are more positive after the family completes the workshop.
- **“Access to Books”** is measured through the number of books donated to the community and given through its *Libro Combo Loco* offers. H-E-B has given over 2.4 million free books to customers through Combo Loco deals, and another 1.8 million books have been donated to community organizations through other *Read 3* book drives.

For more, please see www.readynation.org/ready2go-projects/h-e-b-read-3/

- And in the public/private sphere, many large cities, counties and states have regional initiatives to promote early childhood initiatives, as well as Mayors’ or Governors’ commissions to do the same. To identify leading public efforts in your state or city, it’s worth checking with the Council of Chief State School Officers or the National League of Cities <http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/early-childhood>

Employers interested in supporting children and families can find value in coordinating with like-minded business partners, too. Businesses listen to other businesses, and the involvement of other corporate champions can transform your independent effort into a community-wide network of CEOs and business owners—elevating the profile and increasing the reach and impact of your program. ReadyNation can help you identify organizations with expertise in an array of early childhood issues as well as fellow employers already active in your state. A database of community-based, corporate-driven initiatives is at www.ReadyNation.org/Ready2Go.

Scaling your initiative

As you start to implement your efforts, the level of time, energy and/or financial resources your company is willing and able to invest to support children and families should

Easy—and free—ways companies can share key information with employees, customers and community members

VROOM: www.JoinVroom.org. Hundreds of creative parenting tips in English and Spanish

Mind in the Making: by the Families and Work Institute – <http://mindinthemaking.org/firstbook/>. Tips in English and Spanish for turning behavioral challenges into new executive function skills

Text4Baby: www.Text4baby.org. Daily texts to promote a healthy pregnancy and healthy babies

Too Small to Fail: www.TooSmall.org. Tips for parents on simple activities to nurture young children

Read Aloud 15 MINUTES: <http://www.readaloud.org/>. Resources and materials in English and Spanish for parents and guardians to encourage reading.



Brown Bag “Lunch & Learn” Series

Executives Partnering to Invest in Children

(EPIC) is a coalition committed to making investment in early childhood care, education, health, and parenting among the highest priorities in Colorado. To get the message out, EPIC launched a Lunch & Learn series – regular, hour-long brown bag seminars hosted by any interested employer, and led by local presenters with expertise in each topic. Recent topics include:

- **Health:** Keeping My Family Healthy & Fit; Ask a Pediatrician; Social & Emotional Development
- **Education:** Parents: A Child’s First Teacher; Is My Child Ready for Kindergarten?; The Importance of Language Development
- **Advocacy:** How to be an Early Childhood Advocate; Colorado’s Child Care Contribution Income Tax Credit

In addition, EPIC’s free **Early Childhood Development Toolkit for Employers** is an exceptional resource for any company interested in supporting parents and children.

guide your steps. Some businesses find it easier to test their approach on a smaller scale before rolling out the full initiative.

Evaluating Success and Improving Outcomes

A good evaluation plan drawn up at the beginning of your effort will help you understand the impact your efforts are having on key audiences—namely, your employees, young children and families in your community, and others you intended to help. Conducting evaluations offers other benefits such as:

- Demonstrate to your employees, potential partners, funders and others in the community that you are serious about your initiative and know what you want to accomplish;
- Provide interim data that will let you know if you’re on the right track;
- Indicate whether adjustments in your plan or program are necessary; and
- Provide final data on outcomes of your project that can be used to expand your efforts or inform continued and/or future initiatives.³

How do you functionally evaluate your efforts? Your company—ideally, working closely with your community partner—can design a traditional evaluation and measure impact. Less formal but helpful tools include a basic self-assessment checklist for the leaders of your initiative, as well as employee surveys to gather feedback and constructive input.

Ideas for Your Company

Below are some specific topics your company could tackle, along with initial resources and advice.

Develop and share information and resources

Distribute and promote educational resources for your employees and others to help nurture their young children. Whether your primary focus is on early childhood development, parenting skills, literacy, the importance of quality early child care or countless other issues, you have a vast array of resources and practices at your disposal. You can share existing and new resources with your audiences. Even better, consider customizing these materials for the particular needs or interests of your company or community. Many great sources of information on parenting are available free of charge to you and your employees.

- Be creative as you think about the best methods for disseminating information. You can use written materials like brochures, toolkits, and resource guides. You can post educational resources in your break room at work. If you have a company intranet, consider circulating key information there. Some employers include educational inserts in the paychecks of their employees, or in monthly invoices to their customers. One new initiative, called Vroom, even operates by printing parenting tips on consumer products like disposable diapers.
- Some leading companies and organizations structure their community outreach around a wide variety of informational sessions like lunch series, workshops, and company webinars. See the box, “Brown Bag ‘Lunch & Learn’ Series,” left, for one popular approach—an employer-hosted brown bag “lunch & learn” series, designed by Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) across Colorado.

“ Too many talented women leave working life because they face a difficult choice between caring for a newborn baby or maintaining their careers. Our new mandatory minimum global maternity policy will support over 1,000 Vodafone women employees every year in countries with little or no statutory maternity care... Supporting working mothers at all levels of our organization will ultimately result in better decisions, a better culture and a deeper understanding of our customers’ needs.”

— Vittorio Colao,
Chief Executive Officer,
Vodafone Group



Provide or support quality child care

Employers know firsthand that childcare issues are a major challenge facing working parents today. Research showed that lost work days due to childcare problems cost U.S. businesses a staggering \$3 billion a year.⁴ However, by proactively assisting their employees in this area, many employers have seen that investing in these efforts can help them attract and retain the best employees while reducing costly turnover. When it comes to childcare, there are many ways you can support your employees and your community.

- Refer your workers to the best childcare options in your community, or just share information that will help employees make the best choice among providers for their family.
- If you have the financial resources, you may want to offer onsite child care at your

company, reserve slots for your employees' children with local, high-quality vendors, provide emergency or backup care, and/or help your employees financially—through subsidies, vouchers or reimbursements.

Select childcare resources

- **Child Care Aware (CCA)** features a national database that allows users to search providers by zip code. The website aggregates the many childcare resource and referral agencies across the U.S. (they exist in many cities and most states), offering a centralized directory for parents, employers, and others. CCA also offers guidance on what to look for in a quality provider, how to cover costs of care, and an 800-number where your employees can address questions about specific needs. (<http://childcareaware.org>)
- **The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Childcare and Early Education** promotes health and safety in childcare and early education settings. The NRC webpage includes free publications and downloads, with a special section of resources geared to parents and guardians. (www.nrckids.org)
- **Child Care Referral Central** can help make your decision easier. Childcare referral counselors provide callers with information about the types of quality childcare in your community and referrals to programs to meet individual family needs. (<http://www.childcareservices.org/>)



Offer workplace flexibility and related supports

Workplace flexibility is a staple of family-friendly employer practices, allowing parents to adjust their schedules or locations to meet the needs of their families while meeting their duties at work. Employers who offer flexible work arrangements report a range of benefits, including retaining key talent and improved productivity, which translates into bottom-line financial returns. And for employees, of course, advantages can include greater job satisfaction, deeper loyalty and engagement, and lower stress.⁵ There are lots of ways to support your own workforce in this arena.

- Common forms of flexibility across U.S. companies allow workers some discretion over when they take breaks; granting time off for important family and personal needs without loss of pay;

and occasionally changing starting and ending times of the work day. Many companies also allow some employees to return to work gradually after parental leave, and to work occasionally from home (telecommuting).⁶

- Interestingly, small employers (defined as those with 50 to 99 employees) in 2014 were more likely to offer a range of flexible work options than many of their larger peers.⁷
- If your company can afford to do so, you may also consider implementing a range of paid benefits and personal time off to cover parental and family leave, sick leave, and time off for other forms of caregiving, beyond the 12 weeks of unpaid leave required under federal law today.



Select resources on work/life flexibility

- **When Work Works** is a research-based initiative to highlight how effective and flexible workplaces can yield positive business results and help employees succeed at work and at home. Employers will find numerous free resources, including brochures, toolkits, detailed best practices of your peers, and the WorkFlex Assessment, a 15-minute online survey that will tell you how your policies compare to others in your industry across America. When Work Works is a joint partnership between the Families and Work Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management. (<http://www.whenworkworks.org/>)
- The **Society for Human Resource Management**, a membership organization with members in 160 countries, also offers a vast library of

resources on workplace practices, including flexibility. (www.shrm.org/pages/default.aspx)

- The **U.S. Department of Labor** offers employers guidance, regulations and statistics on flexible workplace practices. (www.dol.gov/dol/topic/workhours/flexibleschedules.htm#doltopics)

Support early learning and literacy

The payoff from the investment in early literacy is well-documented and profound. Providing young children with the critical precursor skills for reading and math can offer a path to improved overall achievement

“Many of the positions in which I help to place workers—such as customer service and sales jobs—typically experience high turnover. Offering flexible shift options is a way to hire and retain high-performing employees, in both the short- and long-term. Flexibility is an important tool to respond to employees’ changing needs—from going back to school, to raising a family, to caring for an elderly family member.”

— Kayla Edwards,
Regional Manager, Express Employment
Professionals - Springfield, Bloomington, &
Jacksonville, Illinois

and future success in school and in life.⁸ As an employer who supports early childhood literacy, you can lead by example.

- Build awareness by sharing information with employees, customers, and community members.
- Support early care and education centers and families in your community with children's events that promote reading.
- Cultivate a love of reading for at-risk children in particular by collecting and distributing new or gently used books to families in need.

Select early learning and literacy resources

- **Read Aloud 15 MINUTES** is a national campaign that is working to make reading aloud every day for at least 15 minutes starting at birth the new standard in child care. Contact them to partner, and to receive a variety of communications materials to share with your employees and stakeholders to help parents prepare their children for the journey from home to school to career. (www.ReadAloud.org)
- **First Book**, a national nonprofit (and First Book Canada), works through existing community programs, literacy efforts and schools to provide an ongoing supply of new books and reading materials to at-risk families. Through customized corporate partnerships, First Book can support and amplify your company's commitment to the educational wellbeing of children in need. (www.firstbook.org)
- **Reach Out and Read** approaches literacy and school readiness from a unique vantage point: that of the

Read Aloud 15 MINUTES

Read Aloud 15 MINUTES works with businesses to build awareness among their employees and stakeholders to the role only parents and primary caregivers can play as a child's first and most important teacher.

Bob Robbins, Read Aloud Executive Director, says, "Every business has an internal communication system to reach employees and we prepare our campaign materials to allow for ease of use and co-branding. For example, Home Depot shares Read Aloud messages with its more than 350,000 associates through video displays in its break rooms, while UPS shares Read Aloud messages through their internal text messaging system. **Our goal is for businesses to get involved with us in building awareness to how 15 minutes of daily reading aloud, starting at birth, builds brain capacity and social-emotional skills that last a lifetime.**"

national medical community. Each year, doctors and nurses at the nearly 5,000 Reach Out and Read program sites nationwide distribute 6.5 million books to children and literacy advice to parents—and incorporate literacy education into regular pediatric checkups. (www.reachoutandread.org)

- **Thirty Million Words**[®] is a parent-directed early learning initiative designed to harness the power of parent language to build a child's brain and impact his or her future. They provide employers and employees access to useful resources and videos about the critical importance of early language exposure to the developing child. (<http://thirtymillionwords.org>)



Promote early childhood health and wellness

Employers interested in helping families support and nurture young children can choose from a wide array of health and wellness initiatives. Among the most urgent areas of need as they relate to the health of young children: childhood nutrition and obesity; immunization and disease prevention; childhood asthma; tobacco exposure; and a range of safety issues. For much more on the correlations among early childhood investment, physical health, and the impacts on America's employers, please see "A Healthy Bottom Line," a new report from ReadyNation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.⁹

Support breastfeeding for mothers and babies

One increasingly common way employers are promoting childhood health is the most basic: By supporting nursing mothers in a

variety of ways:

- Share educational information about the benefits of nursing.
- Consider creating or designating a safe and comfortable breastfeeding room for your employees and/or customers within your company or office locations.
- Consider offering sufficient flexibility for new moms at work. In fact, under federal law, all U.S. employers are required to provide exempt and nonexempt employees with a reasonable break time to express breast milk for infants for up to one year after birth, as well as a private, sanitary place (other than a bathroom) for employees to use.

Select resources on nursing and breastfeeding

- The **Families and Work Institute** offers a detailed Employers' Toolkit on workplace lactation, "Healthy Babies Make Happy Moms—and Excellent Employees", with practical information on supporting new moms and their babies at work. (<http://www.familiesandwork.org/lactation/>)
- **WomensHealth.gov** offers another resource guide, searchable by industry, to help businesses develop the most effective and creative options to meet their business needs while supporting nursing moms. (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions>)
- The **United States Breastfeeding Committee** provides a range of helpful resources, including a guide and issue paper for employers on Workplace Breastfeeding Support. (<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/>)

- **National Business Group on Health** also offers an easy to follow toolkit on how businesses can support nursing mothers. (www.businessgrouphealth.org/pub/f2ffe4f0-2354-d714-5136-79a21e9327ed)

Assist with family tax credits

Employers can indirectly support working parents, as trusted intermediaries to connect employees with various tax credits and benefit information that will put more money in their pockets. Employees can use this money to help offset childcare costs and family expenses, among other needs.

- As an employer, you can help by giving your employees valuable information to make sure they take advantage of credits for which they are eligible.
- You can go further, by promoting or partnering with local tax experts to offer assistance, relying on community resources including those listed below.

Select tax-credit resources

- **Tax Credits for Working Families** provides easy access to research and resources on the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and more. The site also provides extensive information and tools on how community-based organizations and elected officials can raise awareness of these important tax credits and help working families get ahead. (<http://www.taxcreditsforworkingfamilies.org>)
- **Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.** Working parents who paid someone to care for a child, spouse, or dependent in the last year may be able to claim the Child and Dependent Care Credit on their

How ReadyNation Can Help

Business leaders who become members of ReadyNation (at no cost) can receive a variety of helpful resources and support from our staff.

You can:

- Distribute our free materials.
- Receive our bi-monthly e-newsletter to learn about new evidence, business networking events, and early childhood champions.
- Contact us to find speakers as well as sample speeches, op-eds, talking points, and other communication materials.
- Get support for policymaker communications.
- Attend our conferences or connect with the national network of business leader advocates and learn more about championing early childhood programs.

To join us, please go to www.ReadyNation.org/join.

federal tax return. The IRS has developed an easy to understand TOP 10 things they want you to know about claiming a credit for child and dependent care expenses. (<https://www.irs.gov/uac/Ten-Things-to-Know-About-the-Child-and-Dependent-Care-Credit>)

- **Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP).** A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account allows employees to set aside a portion of each paycheck to pay for dependent care expenses. Contributions—up to \$5,000 yearly, per the IRS—are deducted from each paycheck prior to federal, state and social security tax. (<http://www.cpa125.com/FSA-Dependent%20Care.htm>)

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is a federal tax credit for low-income working families. The EITC offsets some or all of those families' federal income taxes and in many cases provides a supplemental source of income to help offset other taxes, including sales and payroll taxes. The IRS provides easy to read information regarding eligibility. (www.irs.gov/Credits-&-Deductions/Individuals/Earned-Income-Tax-Credit/EITC,-Earned-Income-Tax-Credit,-Questions-and-Answers)

Conclusion

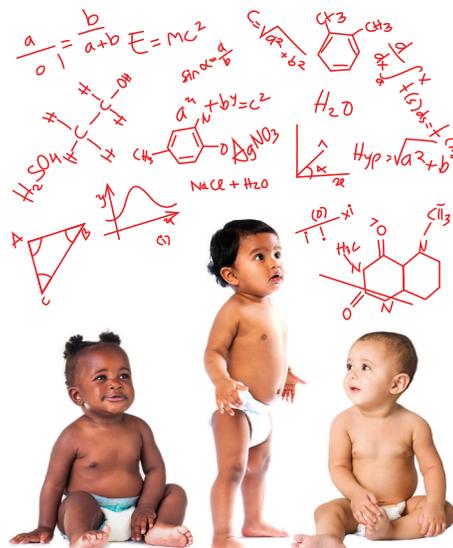
As you consider the right approach and fit for your company, ReadyNation can help.

Our research library offers resources related to the issues discussed here. In the *Business Case for Early Childhood Investments*, for example, you will find the most compelling evidence for employers—and for society—on supporting children and families. Our new brief, *Harnessing the Power of Parents to Support our Youngest Learners*, discusses the central role of parental engagement in early learning, and what employers can do to help. And our growing online database, Ready2Go, offers a collection of early childhood initiatives that have significant business involvement. We hope this brief provides the guidance you need to make your company's commitment successful and rewarding.

THREE KEY YEARS

TALK - READ - PLAY - SING

TO SUPPORT & HELP EVERY CHILD IN AMERICA



by George C. Halvorson

“The first three years of life are the key period when children’s brains develop critical functions that will affect their life-long well-being. The process is amazingly simple and direct. Parents, policymakers, community leaders and business executives all have roles in play in helping young children exercise their brains to develop to their full potential.”

— George Halvorson,
former Chairman and CEO, Kaiser Permanente;
Member, ReadyNation CEO Taskforce on Early
Childhood; Author, *Three Key Years: Talk-Read-Play-
Sing To Support and Help Every Child in America*

Endnotes

- 1 Business Leaders are the Driving Force for Early Childhood Education. Jack Brennan and Sara Watson, for ReadyNation. October 2015.
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