

For immediate release
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***Parenting Counts* workshops teach practices that facilitate early childhood learning**



SEATTLE – How can we communicate with young children in ways that will foster their emotional development and learning skills? How can we help them learn positive ways to cope with the challenges and stresses of everyday life? In January, as part of the public information initiative *Parenting Counts: A Focus on Early Learning*, four free workshops will address these and other key questions while teaching parenting practices that facilitate early childhood learning and development. The workshops will be presented by KCTS Television in partnership with the King County Library System and are funded by a grant from the Seattle-based Talaris Research Institute.

The *Parenting Counts: A Focus on Early Learning* initiative is the result of a unique collaboration between KCTS and Talaris Research Institute, which studies early learning in children from birth to five years of age and translates research into practical applications for parents. The campaign provides parents and caregivers with useful information based on research conducted by Talaris. Designed to help adults understand the importance of parenting in the early years, *Parenting Counts: A Focus on Early Learning* features six 60-second informational spots that were produced by KCTS and are currently airing on PBS stations nationwide, along with online resources and print materials, all aimed at providing parents, childcare providers and parent education specialists with an engaging, informative and useful look at how children think, feel and learn in the early years.

The two-hour *Parenting Counts* workshops are open to parents, childcare providers and educators of children ages birth to five. Facilitated by a local education professional, each of the four sessions will explore specific parenting practices that contribute to early childhood learning and will include viewing of *Parenting Counts* spots followed by a discussion of the parenting tips introduced in the spots and the research supporting those tips. In addition, the facilitator will share tips on media literacy and the use of television as a learning tool.

All workshop participants will receive *Parenting Counts* informational materials, KCTS Ready To Learn outreach materials and children's books to encourage early literacy. Participants will significantly expand the workshops' reach when they return to their neighborhoods, childcare centers and schools and share the information they have learned.

Workshop details are as follows.

“Communicating with Baby”

This workshop will focus on the following:

- *Baby’s Cues* – getting in tune with baby
- *Parentese* – teaching sounds and words to baby
- *Reading Faces* – communicating approval

Dates, times and locations:

Wednesday, January 12, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Kingsgate Library, 425.821.7686

Saturday, January 15, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Algona-Pacific Library, 253.833.3554

“Handling Stress”

This workshop will focus on the following:

- *Rough Day* – handling everyday stress
- *Copycats* – how children learn by imitative behavior
- *Testing 1,2,3* – how children learn by hypothesis testing

Dates, times and locations:

Thursday, January 27, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Covington Library, 253.630.8761

Saturday, January 29, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Bellevue Regional Library, 425.450.1775

To register, participants may either call the library phone number provided above or go online at www.kcls.org/stars/registration. Registration for each workshop begins two weeks prior to the date of the workshop. Space is limited to a maximum of 30 participants per workshop; registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Educators who participate in one or more of the workshops will be eligible to receive Washington STARS credit. (STARS is the Washington State Training and Registry System, a career development system designed to improve child care through basic and ongoing training for child care providers. The King County Library System can provide early childhood educators with STARS credit for approved professional development activities.)

The grant from Talaris Research Institute also provides funding for two “train-the-trainer” workshops for volunteer group leaders working with parents of newborns in the Seattle-based Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS), which brings parents of young children together in community-based discussion and support groups. The grant will help support the distribution of ***Parenting Counts*** print materials to parents participating in PEPS and to parents who visit Yakima, Toppenish and Grandview hospitals and medical clinics that are participating in Reach Out and Read (ROR), a national program that promotes early literacy by making books a routine part of pediatric care. Materials will be offered in English and Spanish.

Additional Support

Talaris Research Institute also has provided funding for ***Parenting Counts*** mini-grants to PBS stations. These dollars are helping to promote community partnerships, creative activities and sustainability of the early learning topics within local markets. Outreach coordinators from PBS

station grant recipients attended a training session hosted by Talaris at the Talaris Conference Center in Seattle September 29-October 1.

The Boeing Company is helping to support the *Parenting Counts* outreach campaign's work with parents and child caregivers by donating services for printing of materials about early childhood development and best parenting practices.

About KCTS Television

KCTS Television is the largest public television station in the Pacific Northwest and provides an essential service to viewers by creating and distributing content that informs, involves and inspires. KCTS produces the weekly regional current affairs series, *KCTS Connects*; the weekly business and finance series, *Serious Money*; quarterly *Ask the Governor* call-in specials; and the annual *Golden Apple Awards* honoring examples of excellence in education across Washington state.

KCTS airs more than 50 hours of quality, commercial-free children's educational programming each week. The station works to enhance children's literacy skills and school readiness with a variety of community-based services, including online resources, *Ready To Learn* workshops for parents and educators, the annual *Reading Rainbow* Young Writers and Illustrators Contest, the *Share a Story* literacy campaign, and the distribution of thousands of free books to children and families who otherwise would not own them.

About Talaris Research Institute

Talaris Research Institute, www.talaris.org, is a nonprofit institute for advanced study located in Seattle. Talaris's mission is to advance knowledge of early learning and the importance of parenting in the first years of life. Dedicated to providing parents, caregivers and parenting professionals with research-based information on how children think, feel and learn, Talaris combines the science of learning with the practice of learning. After careful analysis of a large array of scientific information, Talaris translates research into easy-to-understand tools and information for all who nurture children. Talaris Research Institute is funded by Apex Foundation.

Credits: Funding for the *Parenting Counts: A Focus on Early Learning* workshops is provided by Talaris Research Institute. Funding for production of the *Parenting Counts* on-air spots is provided by Apex Foundation, the family foundation of Bruce and Jolene McCaw. Outreach materials and activities are funded by Talaris Research Institute, with additional support provided by The Boeing Company.

Resources for Press

Workshops: Members of the press are welcome to attend the *Parenting Counts* workshops. To make arrangements to attend a workshop, please contact Pat Mallinson in Press Relations at KCTS Television (206.443.6798, pmallinson@kcts.org).

Screeners: Members of the press may obtain VHS screeners of the *Parenting Counts* on-air informational spots by contacting Pat Mallinson at KCTS or Cindi Pendergraft at Talaris Research Institute (206.529.6898 or cell 206.571.5532, cp@talaris.org).