



## The Ramey Initiative: Building A Foundation for a Lifetime of Learning

- Children's Home + Aid is a recognized statewide leader in early childhood education. We understand that quality early childhood education during the first five years of a child's life creates a critical foundation for academic success and achievement.
- Our Early Childhood Care & Education programs target families in at-risk communities. Children born in high-risk environments (defined by low income, young parental age, and low maternal education) face significant barriers to healthy development and learning. If these deficits are not addressed, these children will face a lifetime of obstacles that will lead to poor academic performance.
- Access to quality early childhood education is the dividing line for many families between economic isolation and economic opportunity. The most cost-effective and successful way to close the achievement gap is through early intervention and childhood education.
- Children's Home + Aid has taken a major step forward in setting new benchmarks for early childhood education with the introduction of the Ramey teaching model at all of its five Early Childhood Care & Education Child + Family Centers. The Ramey approach utilizes proven early learning strategies. It gives children from high-risk environments a strong foundation to successfully launch their lifetime of learning. Children's Home + Aid is the only organization using the Ramey teaching model in Illinois.
- The Ramey approach is the product of more than 30 years of groundbreaking research in early childhood development. It is named for Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey. The Ramey approach emerged from their Abecedarian Project. Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey's Abecedarian project was a carefully controlled scientific study of the potential benefits of early childhood education for poor children.  
(<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/>):
- The Ramey approach identifies "Seven Essentials in Children's Everyday Experiences." These include:
  1. Encourage exploration
  2. Mentor in basic skills
  3. Celebrate developmental advances
  4. Rehearse and extend new skills
  5. Protect from inappropriate disapproval
  6. Communicate richly and responsively
  7. Guide and limit behavior
- These fundamentals shape how young children learn and are the cornerstone of training for our early childhood educators.
- Children are born with the same potential to become successful learners. In fact, almost all healthy children test at the same developmental range up to one year. After one year of age, significant differentials begin to appear in developmental tests, with children from high-risk backgrounds showing developmental deficits.

- Ameliorating these deficits, or preventing them in the first place, is the mission of our Early Childhood Care & Education Centers.
- Considerable research has shown that the least costly solution is to intervene early. Quality intervention has been shown to improve five-year-olds' IQ scores by 18 points, putting them at the same level as their peers.
- The Abecedarian Project study and numerous follow-up research projects have been published extensively in academic journals and books. Notable descriptions include Poverty and Early Childhood Education Intervention, 2006, Elizabeth Pungello and Frances Campbell - FPG Child Development Institute and Right from Birth, 1999, Ramey and Ramey, among many others.

*“The implementation of the Ramey’s teaching initiative is tremendously exciting and will open the door to countless opportunities in the lives of our children.”*

Nancy Ronquillo  
Children’s Home + Aid President and CEO

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