

**2011 Annual Learning Laboratories and Education Systems Conference**  
**Hyatt at Olive 8 • Seattle, Washington**  
**May 23-25, 2011**

Greetings, Learning Labs Conference Participants!

As representatives of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, we look forward to meeting you in Seattle in just a couple of weeks! For an early glance at what the conference entails, we have attached the agenda for your review. The 2011 Annual Learning Labs Conference will be held at the Hyatt at Olive 8, located at 1635 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle, Washington, beginning Monday afternoon, May 23, 2011, and ending Wednesday evening, May 25, 2011.

As you review the agenda, you will notice that this is not your typical conference format. Many traditional conferences often rely on a lecture-discussion presentation format, with little time allotted for detailed questioning, dialogue, or reflective conversation among participants. From the beginning of this effort, representatives of your respective initiatives, referred to as Learning Laboratories for Early Learning and Education, urged us to take a departure from the typical networking conference format by designing an approach aimed at creating a *learning community*. As we explored this idea, we became aware that learning communities have come of age as a mechanism for furthering learning, supporting innovative thinking, and promoting collective action.

To implement this effort, teams from each Learning Labs site, in partnership with a group of consultants, have worked together over the past few months to develop the conference format and content. It is our sincere hope that we will work together to learn, sharpen self-insight, promote creativity and rigor, and encourage candid, usable peer feedback. This year's conference goals are to:

- Convene Learning Labs site teams to advance the commitment of leading for racial equity in early childhood and education settings across the country;
- Create a forum where Learning Labs partners can share successful strategies, lessons learned, and major challenges in being strong, committed leaders for racial equity; and
- Develop individual and state team commitments to taking intentional steps to eradicate racial disparities in educational systems.

We are also excited about the learning expeditions we have thoughtfully planned, and which will focus on various early learning approaches in action within the diverse urban environment of Seattle. In the past, many of you have asked if it would be appropriate to bring gifts for the children or programs that we are visiting and, if so, what types of gifts we might recommend. First, this is a great idea! Second, we want to stress that this is *optional*. If you should decide to bring a gift or gifts, we encourage you to bring gifts such as children's books or something representative of your community or state.

As a leader for children in your state, you were selected to participate in the creation of this learning community because of the deep understanding of your initiative and its respective strengths, challenges, dilemmas, and lessons learned. What we are asking from each of you is a significant commitment to share your knowledge, take risks, pose questions, support each other's learning, and serve as advocates for each other's success. By sharing experiences, challenges, and innovations, it is our hope that, together, we will generate powerful leverage for improving outcomes for children, families, and communities.

We look forward to seeing you in Seattle!

Sincerely,

Greg, Val, Jenefer, Cindy, and Robin  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation



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