



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, CHE
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Administration



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3RD ANNUAL EMBRACING DIVERSITY CONFERENCE **CONCERNING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:** *Addressing Disparities in Early Childhood Care and Education*

The third annual Embracing Diversity Conference for Children and Families will be held on **Friday, September 17 and Saturday, September 18, 2004** at the **Midwest Airline Center, 400 West Wisconsin Avenue, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

This conference brings local and national leaders together in order to identify specific racial, ethnic, and economic disparities present in Milwaukee's early childhood health care and education, and to explore strategies to bridge these gaps. This year's theme is "Strength to Recognize Issues. Courage to Seek Solutions." The event is open to community and business leaders, parents, teachers, administrators, early childhood educators and care providers.

On Friday, a panel comprised of **Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett; Bevan K. Baker CHE, Commissioner of Health, City of Milwaukee Health Department;** William Andrekopoulos, Superintendent for Milwaukee Public Schools; Ricardo Diaz, Executive Director of United Community Center; and Dr. Luis "Tony" Baez, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Milwaukee Area Technical College will convene to discuss Milwaukee's particular inequities.

Keynote speakers for the conference include Adelaide Sanford, Vice Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents; Naomi Haines Griffith, Author and Consultant on child welfare issues; Dr. Calvin Mackie, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Tulane University and Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, Educational Consultant and Author, African American Images Publishing Company.

"We know our low-income working mothers and children face incredible obstacles and need our city to work together to ensure that early childhood environments are of the best quality," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "For future learning and life-long successes, an emphasis on health, education, and early learning are crucial for the elimination of inequalities in our community."

One of the inequalities to be discussed is Milwaukee's racial disparity in infant mortality. In 2002, 134 Milwaukee infants died before their first birthday. There were nearly 3 times as many African-American infant deaths as there were White or Hispanic infant deaths.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department continues to reach young children through its Maternal and Child Health programs, and the Health and Safety in Child Care Program (HSCC). "The expectation that child care staff have expertise not only in early childhood education and care but also in health and health services puts a tremendous strain on early childhood providers," said Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, CHE. "HSCC provides training and health consultation to those who work directly with young children."

The conference is endorsed by the Early Childhood Council of Milwaukee and sponsored by Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee County and City of Milwaukee Health Department. It is facilitated by 4C - Community Coordinated Child Care.

For more information contact Terri Dix, Steering Committee at 414-224-0404 ext. 40