

WHAT BUSINESS PEOPLE CAN DO TO HELP WITH EARLY LEARNING

- Understand the issues of early education and learning. Read the research on the readiness of children at their entrance to kindergarten, as well as information about early learning standards, developed by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services. Both are outstanding works!
- Become familiar with “best practices” for providing help to employees with young families. Visit the MnBel website (www.mnbel.org) for information about best practices and implement them as appropriate in your company. Visit other related sites for more ideas you can immediately implement (e.g., www.ready4k.org).
- Get feedback from your employees about how your company could be more helpful regarding their early care and education needs. Experiment with different ways of supporting their needs.
- Connect with Community Education leaders in your local school district as early childhood education and family needs have been a priority focus of theirs for years.
- Arrange for MnBel, MELF, Ready 4 K or Rolnick/Grunewald as speakers to the influential business/industry groups in your community (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis, church groups, etc.). Doing this will help spread the word to more business people.
- Update business people you know about the incredible challenges and opportunities surrounding healthy early childhood development, ask for their participation.
- Attend MnBel, MELF, or Ready 4 K meetings to learn more about the issues and get to meet others involved in those groups.
- Join MnBel; it is no cost and connects you with other interested business people.
- When you see terms ‘Early Childhood, “Early Care and Learning’, ‘Early Care and Education’ and ‘Early Childhood Development’, stop and listen to what is being presented.
- Influence local, county and state leaders about how we can create more opportunities by focusing on this issue.
- When you can, contribute dollars where they have the biggest impact.
- Visit child care centers, early childhood classrooms and kindergarten classes to get a firsthand look at the issues facing our youngest children today.
- Provide your personal and professional expertise to the Early Childhood Coalition nearest you. The formal and informal coalitions are doing wonderful work in getting local communities active around this issue.
- For those of you who own your own company and/or a high level executive, consider joining a statewide group that will examine some of the most difficult early learning problems we face. The group is still in the process of forming. For more information, contact Mark Scally, 612-987-9977.
- Observe a three or four-year old child and consider how difficult life may be if we don’t help him/her prepare for kindergarten.
- Decide that you won’t allow early childhood to continue to be the most SILENT BUSINESS ISSUE we face today!!!