

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOW CAN THE ARTS HELP PRESCHOOLS?

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST AWARDS \$339,030 TO ARTS FOR LEARNING TO FIND OUT

Miami, FL (February 2007) – Arts for Learning (A4L), the Miami Affiliate of Young Audiences, received a \$339,030 grant from The Children's Trust to conduct a two year study on how the arts support literacy and school readiness in preschools students. The study will look at Arts for Learning's impact on teaching practices, literacy related activities in the classroom, student engagement, parental involvement and student progress in phonemic awareness, oral language skills, and listening comprehension.

For the study, Arts for Learning will recruit 50 early childhood centers that have inclusion settings for children with disabilities and whose students are from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. One 3-year-old and one 4-year-old classroom from each center will participate in the study for a total of approximately 1,500 children, 200 teachers, and 1,500 parents/guardians. Partners in the study include the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, VSA arts, and Miami-Dade Child Development Services. Abt Associates, Inc., an international research organization, will conduct the evaluation.

The program, called Early GET smART, utilizes resources created by VSA arts to train early childhood teachers to expand story time through arts activities as a means to emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually prepare children for school. The program integrates visual art, dramatic play, creative movement, and music into the classroom to promote sensory, cognitive, and social development in Miami's youngest children.

As part of Early GET smART, A4L also provides preschools with family events. During the family events, parents and their children are led through creative arts activities that not only set a sound foundation for reading at home but provide parents resources to support their child's learning outside of school.

Founded in 2000, A4L is a dynamic organization with a proven track record for developing and delivering innovative arts integrated programs for children. A4L's programs support life skill development and academic achievement and are provided to schools, preschools and after-school centers throughout Miami-Dade County. This year, A4L will reach more than 13,000 students.

The Early GET smART research study is funded by The Children's Trust. The Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County.

Arts for Learning is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing teaching and learning through the arts and community cultural resources. For more information please contact Kalyn James at 305-576-1212, ext 32.

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