



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Early Education and Care  
Press Release**

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## **EEC and United Way Announce *Brain Building in Progress Week* in Massachusetts**

BOSTON – Recognizing the importance of enriching opportunities in children's healthy development and learning, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley (United Way) announced today the kick-off of *Brain Building in Progress Week* in Massachusetts.

From April 12 to 18, families, educators, business leaders, and other partners engage in activities that support the importance of early enriching environments and experiences to the future success of young children. These efforts are part of Massachusetts' statewide campaign, *Brain Building in Progress*, that advances the critical role that adults play in fostering children's brain development and learning.

Governor Baker signed a proclamation to declare April 12 to 18 as *Brain Building in Progress Week* in Massachusetts, which coincides with the national *Week of the Young Child*. Throughout the week, EEC and United Way are providing resources to families that include tips for having "brain building moments" with children such as pointing out and naming items while grocery shopping, counting the number of stops while riding the bus or train, and asking open-ended questions after reading a story.

"It is so important for young children to be exposed to enriching environments because these support the healthy development of their brains, and brain building provides children with a solid foundation for learning and future academic success," said Early Education and Care Commissioner Tom Weber. "Our family and community engagement networks are important partners in communicating and teaching about brain building, especially ways that parents can be brain builders at home or anywhere."

"Over 13,000 families and almost 19,000 children have benefited from receiving *Brain Building* toolkits and other resources given out as part of this statewide campaign," said Michael K. Durkin, President at United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. "Together, we can do more than any one organization can alone. That's why it

is so powerful when local communities come together to raise awareness of important issues like early childhood and help to ensure we build the strongest foundation for early learning among the children of our Commonwealth.”

Joining United Way and the Department of Early Education and Care as sponsors of Brain Building in Progress Week are Boston Children’s Museum, WGBH, Parent-Child Home Program, Massachusetts Head Start Association, Thrive in 5, Early Ed for All, Boston Alliance for Early Education, MassAEYC, and Mass. Department of Public Health.

Over 80 communities across Massachusetts are participating in Brain Building in Progress Week, with activities including:

- In **Lawrence**, **Mayor Dan Rivera** is supporting the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council and Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) by reading to young children, and issuing a challenge to Mayors and public officials across the state to join him in being “brain builders” in their communities.
- Over **200 locations** in **Boston’s 10 neighborhoods** will be transformed into **Brain Building Zones**. The list, developed by the Boston Family Engagement Network, includes medical offices, museums, community centers, laundry facilities, food markets, and restaurants
- **Westwood Public Schools** is holding "**Kids at Play...Brains at Work**," featuring a variety of parent education opportunities and family events, and hosting a "**Books Build Brains**" exhibit by area early education and care programs on display at the library.
- The **Early Childhood Alliance of Framingham Public Schools** is hosting a “Passport to Learning!” Family Fair, where children and their families can visit learning zones with activities from fitness to science, technology, math and literacy.

A comprehensive list of *Brain Building in Progress Week* events can be found at [brainbuildinginprogress.org](http://brainbuildinginprogress.org), as well as a comprehensive list of “Brain Building Zones” and events that are easily searched by community throughout the year. EEC and United Way are also promoting *Brain Building in Progress Week* using #IamABrainBuilder on Twitter.

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