In 2001, SELF (Support for Early Learning and Families) partners joined to create a diverse coalition of community organizations and public agencies working to improve outcomes for Clark County’s youngest children. After much study, SELF partners created a Clark County Early Learning System Plan that outlines strategies for getting all children in Clark County ready for success in school and in life. Broadly, these categories include:

- Family Support and Education
- Provider Support and Education
- Community Awareness and Sustainability
- Community Collaboration and Networking.

This plan guides local early learning investments necessary to move Clark County forward.
FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

• Kindergarten Readiness and Parents As Teachers – School Districts and SELF partners work together to develop Kindergarten Transition Plans and implement services that will address social, emotional and cognitive needs of preschool children. PAT is an early childhood parent education and family support program designed to empower all parents to give their child the best possible start in life.

• Children’s Health Initiative – SELF partners are implementing a Family Wellness Project that provides home visits, family support circles and referral to key community resources. A key component is start-up of a Nurse Family Partnership program, providing home visits to low-income, first-time parents of newborns.

• Early Literacy – Read and Play storytimes are held weekly for parents and children, age 0 to 5. Discovery Kits, loaned to parents and child care providers, contain 8-12 books, kinesthetic manipulatives, puppets, music cassettes and compact discs, videos and DVDs.

PROVIDER SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

• Clark County Resource Team – Interdisciplinary collaborative team from three agencies representing expertise on health and safety, early childhood development and mental health. Consultation services, training, and referrals delivered to child care providers at no cost.

• Family Home Child Care Provider Networks – Pilot Project launched in Washougal Camas where home-based providers network, share resources, meet training requirements and celebrate their successes. The result is improved program quality and a more stable business.

• Southwest Washington Tapestry Conference – Local agencies and programs partner to sponsor a 300 person conference to celebrate and honor child care providers’ commitment to children and families. The event includes numerous workshops, guest speakers and resources.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY:

• Born Learning Campaign – This public awareness and engagement campaign helps parents and caregivers explore how to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities. The SELF website (www.SELFWa.org) provides an A to Z listing of early learning resources for parents and caregivers. Informative early learning Resource Corners are located across Clark County.

• Clark County Early Learning Fund Honoring Rick and Sarah Melching – SELF, in partnership with The Foundation for Early Learning, has launched this Fund to support and sustain early learning services in Clark County. $300,000 in grants were awarded in Spring 2006.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING:

• SELF (Support for Early Learning and Families) – 20 partners meet monthly to coordinate services and the early learning system; sponsor Public Forums; and maintain four Standing Committees (Operations, Development, Cultural Competency and Community Awareness).

• Cultural Competency – This SELF committee works to ensure that SELF is a welcoming environment and achieves cultural competency in its service delivery. Two Cultural Conversation Circles have been held to develop cultural awareness among SELF partners.

• Clark County Early Learning System Plan (2003) – The Plan is a roadmap to guide SELF in its efforts to meet service gaps and coordinate a fragmented early learning system.

CONTACT SELF
Email: Info@SELFWa.org.
On the web: www.SELFWa.org
Phone: (360) 750-9735
or Toll-free: (800) 282-0874

Mail:
SELF, c/o ESD 112 CCR&R
2500 N.E. 65th Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98661.