

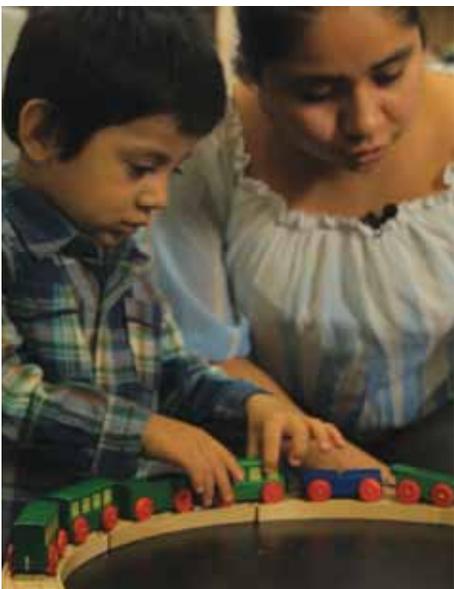
Room to Grow news

SPRING 2012



DID YOU KNOW?

The American Academy of Pediatric Medicine released a policy statement warning that “toxic stress” early in life may be the biggest danger to children. Toxic stress can result from a variety of factors including violence in the home, parental stress, or physical or emotional neglect. If left untreated, toxic stress can lead to learning disabilities and health problems. Room to Grow helps parents cope with stress and create a strong emotional bond with their children, thus ensuring a safe and nurturing home environment.



WHAT WE NEED NOW

Speech therapists recommend using sippy cups with straws because they strengthen the muscles in the lips and jaws and increase tongue control, which can help improve speech development. Visit our registry on givingsomething.com to buy straw sippy cups for children in our program.

Join Room to Grow's email list at www.roomtogrow.org. Follow us on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RoomtoGrow) [twitter](https://twitter.com/RoomtoGrow_org) @RoomtoGrow_org

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I approach my one-year anniversary at Room to Grow, I am more convinced than ever of the transformative power of our unique program. It has been rewarding to see our impact over the last year (See Program Update), and I look forward to our plans for growth in New York. A strategic plan lays out several key goals for us in the next few years, including:

- Increasing the number of families served by Room to Grow's core program from

300 to 450.

- Broadening and deepening our data collection and outcome measurement in order to better quantify the impact we are having on children and families.

All of you will be a vital part of Room to Grow's future.

Thank you for your support.

Andrea Salwen Kopel

Executive Director, Room to Grow, New York

PROGRAM UPDATE

In 2011, Room to Grow:

- Served 263 families looking for a supportive place to gain the knowledge and resources they need in their journey through early childhood
- Held 852 one-on-one meetings—over 1,700 hours helping parents nurture and support their children in their cognitive, physical, and social development
- Collected and sorted 90,000 new and nearly new donated items
- Distributed nearly 50,000 baby items
- Engaged over 1,000 volunteers to sort and display thousands of donated items for distribution to our families
- Enrolled 106 babies into the program
- Graduated 84 children from Room to Grow's program

New National Leadership

In September 2011, Room to Grow's Board of Directors approved a five-year strategic plan that calls for programmatic growth within our current cities (New York and Boston) as well as targeted expansion to additional cities.

Saskia Epstein, who has served as the Executive Director for our Boston site, has transitioned into the role of National CEO to spearhead and support these ambitious plans.

Julie Burns, the Founder of Room to Grow, will continue to remain actively involved as a Board Member and as Strategic Advisor to the CEO.

CLIENT SNAPSHOT: Sharon Garcia and son Matthew

Sharon was working full-time at a deli when she and her husband Michael learned she was pregnant with their third child. Sharon's two sons, Derrick and Carlos, have special needs and suffer from learning and speech disabilities. Sharon knew she needed help and was grateful when her pre-natal care center referred her to Room to Grow.

The family's social worker at Room to Grow, Andrea, helped to ensure that Sharon and Michael had all the knowledge, services, and material items they needed. Andrea recommended specialized evaluation for Matthew, who began receiving speech therapy through

the Early Intervention Program.

Andrea referred Sharon to classes and a peer support group for parents with special needs children, which has helped her find effective coping strategies. Andrea even convinced a local karate school to provide free classes for the older boys, giving them a perfect outlet for their energy and helping them develop focus and self-control.

Matthew recently graduated from Room to Grow and continues to improve with developmental therapy. Sharon plans to return to work once Matthew starts pre-Kindergarten.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: For One In New York

Room to Grow is proud to partner with For One In New York, an organization that helps children in need by providing key items that will impact their future. Linn Tanzman founded For One in New York in 2010 to help some of New York City's most vulnerable children – those in the foster care system and infants born into poverty.

For One in New York operates For One Baby in New York, providing funds for critical baby supplies – like cribs, breast pumps, and educational and developmental toys – to low-income families. Room to Grow's partnership with For One in New York ensures that our families receive essential items that Room to Grow either cannot accept as donations (cribs) or does not receive in sufficient supply (breast pumps,



art supplies, and dolls of color).

Over the past year, For One in New York has provided 11 breast pumps and 5 cribs to 14 Room to Grow families. Additionally, 32 families received art supplies and dolls of color.