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For Immediate Release

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BrighStars and IBM Celebrate IBM's Investment in Rhode Island's Young Children with Grants of Technology and Services Valued at over \$100,000.

PROVIDENCE, RI, April 16, 2012 – In the fall of 2012, IBM awarded a total of 43 Young Explorer™ computer learning units to 13 different BrightStars-rated, not-for-profit child care centers around the state with grants of technology and services valued at over \$100,000. On Thursday, April 18, 2013 from 10am- 11am BrightStars and IBM will be celebrating this award at Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center; a program awarded 3 computer units.

Many of the child care programs that received the IBM award offer services to low-income and other at-risk children. In total, 43 computer learning units were installed in 13 BrightStars rated child care programs. Approximately 750 children now have the opportunity to learn and use the latest technology. When used appropriately, technology and media can enhance a child's cognitive and social abilities.

The IBM donation complements the work of BrightStars and the state's U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. Rhode Island was awarded the grant for demonstrating that it is implementing innovations and reforms for its birth-age 5 education system.

"IBM congratulates Rhode Island, which earned Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grants," said IBM regional CCCA manager."Rhode Island is clearly in the vanguard when it comes to providing innovative educational models for their youngest children. We thought it was only right that the private sector, led by IBM, support its efforts by providing exciting technology and expert services that can be a valuable component of their programs"

The 13 programs that received the award are:

- Alliance JCC Early Childhood Center, Providence
- Alphabet Soup, North Providence
- Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center, Providence
- Bright Futures Early Learning Center, Providence
- Capital City Community Centers Early Childhood Learning Center, Providence
- Comprehensive Community Action Program, Cranston
- Connecting for Children & Families, Inc. – Hope Street Child Care Center, Woonsocket
- Federal Hill House Association, Providence
- Four Corners Early Learning Center YMCA, Cumberland
- Heritage Park YMCA, Pawtucket
- Nickerson Community Center, Providence
- Sandpipers Early Learning Center, Middletown,
- Urban League Early Learning Center, Providence

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About BrightStars

BrightStars is managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAEYC). BrightStars helps families in Rhode Island find quality child care, early learning, and school-age programs by dialing toll free at 1-855-398-7605 or by visiting our website www.BrightStars.org. BrightStars is also Rhode Island's tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Through our star rating system and professional development services, we help child care providers learn about best practices and apply them to the care children receive.

About IBM KidSmart Early Learning Grant Program

Young Explorers™ are the centerpiece of IBM's KidSmart Early Learning grant program which IBM developed nearly 15 years ago to help reduce the digital divide, especially in urban areas, where it was becoming apparent that children from less affluent backgrounds needed access to specialized technology tools and educational materials to better prepare them to enter school. IBM's KidSmart Early Learning grant program uses technology to enrich preschool and pre-kindergarten curriculum with interactive teaching and learning activities. In addition IBM provides technical support and professional development for participating child care centers. The program includes access to the KidSmart website, www.kidsmartearlylearning.org.