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- **Quality family conversations positively impact low-income children's school readiness.** A recent study¹ finds that low-income preschool aged children's language development, reading, writing, and success in school is determined partly by the quality of conversations between parents and children – such as the proportion of narrative and explanatory talk during meals – that take place during the preschool years.
- **Cultural institutions allow for vocabulary-rich family interactions.** Research² suggests conversations that parents and children have in these environments, in which children encounter new vocabulary and express their thoughts and opinions, can be critical in supporting young children's early reading success and oral-language skills.
- **Low-income families have little disposable income after rent has been paid.** The Community Service Society's (CSS) recent report³ on low-income New Yorkers reveals that low-income working families have less than \$32 per week, per family member to spend on basic needs after the rent has been paid.
- **NYC's cultural institutions are cost prohibitive for most low-income families.** While a handful of cultural institutions offer a "free day" or "free time" for low-income families, there continues to be an underserved population of New Yorkers who cannot afford the admissions fees which range from \$10 - \$30+.
- **Cool Culture provides free museum access, information and support to NYC's low-income families.** Cool Culture provides 50,000 low-income families enrolled in subsidized child care, Head Start⁴ and pre-kindergarten programs throughout the five boroughs with free access to 80 of the City's best-known culture institutions including museums, botanical gardens and zoos.
- **Low-income families who utilize Cool Culture's programs spend significant family time in NYC's cultural institutions.** Cool Culture families who received a free Cool Culture Family Pass in 2008 reported more than 97,000 visits to Cool Culture's Institutional Partners last year – averaging 6.7 visits⁵ per family, per year – nearly double the visits of New Yorkers overall⁵.

¹ *The Role of Family and Home in the Literacy Development of Children from Low-Income Backgrounds*. Summer 2001. Stacey A. Storch and Grover J. Whitehurst. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, no. 92.

² Language-Rich Home and School Environments Are Key to Reading Success. 1997. Leon Lynn. The Harvard Education Letter. Volume XIII, Number 4. <http://naecs.crc.uiuc.edu/newsletter/volume4/number3.html>

³ *Making the Rent, 2002 to 2005: Changing Rent Burdens & Housing Hardships Among Low-Income New Yorkers*. December 2006. Victor Bach and Tom Waters. Community Service Society Report. Update Report. www.cssny.org/news/index.html

⁴ Established by Congress in 1965, Head Start is a federally funded, community based child-development program designed to meet the needs of low-income children (birth through age five) and their families. Families participating in the Head Start program must meet federal poverty guidelines. For 2007, a family of four with an income of \$20,650 or below may qualify for the Head Start program. www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb

⁵ *Profile of Participation in Arts and Culture*. 2001. Miringoff, Marque-Luisa, Sandra Opdycke and Marc Miringoff. Fordham Institute for Innovation in Social Policy. www.nyfa.org/files_uploaded/Pages_37-48.pdf