

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Building Child-Friendly Communities

Any new mother who walks out the door with her new baby for the first time knows the feeling: *Things are different now*. New parents have to adjust to the awkward reality of schlepping another person around everywhere and being held responsible for their every mood. Running errands can take hours instead of minutes; you need quiet places to feed the little one; you face public scrutiny for every tear and whine; you need help with the littlest things, and most of all you *care* how other people treat your child.

Nearly ten years ago, a group of San Francisco mothers found they had this experience in common, and decided to do something about it. They shared stories about their favorite places to shop, and came up with a method to educate businesses about how to treat mothers and children helpfully and appropriately. They founded **Child-Friendly Initiative**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and developed the *Child-Friendly Seal of Approval*. And they watched their neighborhoods change into more friendly, welcoming places.

Now parents everywhere can add their favorite businesses to “The Child-Friendly Locator,” CFI’s national database. Businesses who meet the criteria these mothers developed—with the help and blessing of parenting experts such as Martha and Bill Sears and Peggy O’Mara (editor of *Mothering* magazine)—can become certified and display the seal.

But these mothers did not stop there. They discovered a philosophy. *“When children are valued and their needs are met, society benefits; children thrive and communities unite,”* says founder Michele Mason, now a new-parent educator. There are books and resources on their website that explore this idea, and parents in towns and cities nationwide are encouraged to join together, form chapters, and make this vision come alive in their own special way.

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What People are Saying

“When I tell parents about Child-Friendly Initiative, their eyes light up. ‘You mean there will be a way to know where my child is welcome? You mean someone is actually working to make the United States a more child friendly society?’ There is little in today’s society that could make such a difference. Everything starts with how we treat our children.”

—Peggy O’Mara, editor and publisher of *Mothering Magazine*

“I regard CFI as a very important contribution to reducing stress in children. I believe what you are doing is vitally important.”

—David Elkind, professor of Child Development at Tufts University,
and author of *The Ties that Stress* and *Reinventing Childhood*

“Vitaly Important”

“I appreciate your organization and its goals. I want to support child-friendly businesses; my husband and I feel that consumer activism can be a powerful force in changing attitudes and practices.” —Tracy Russell, mother

“A Powerful Force”

“Most Americans believe that children should grow up to be independent and self-reliant, and this ideology often overrides our natural instincts to keep our kids close. How wonderful it is that organizations such as Child-Friendly Initiative are there to provide support for parents who want to go against the cultural norm and keep their babies and children physically and emotionally close.” —Meredith F. Small, Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University and author of *Our Babies, Ourselves*

“I’ve been hoping to discover an organization like this one. Keep up the good work!”
—Lewis Ann, father

“Good Work!”

“Families make up so much of society, but we seem to go unrecognized much of the time. People seem to think children are a burden, not a joy—and it shows in the way children are treated. I am so glad to have found CFI!”
—Celeste Tepedino, mother

“CFI is doing very important work. I give you my blessings!”
—Anne Lamott, mother and author of *Operating Instructions* and *Traveling Mercies*