

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd to highlight importance of breastfeeding

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and Dr. Elvira L. Henares-Esguerra, Director of Children for Breastfeeding, Inc., (CfB), a non-government organization, recently inked an agreement to push for the National Plan of Action on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), including breastfeeding.

“Breastfeeding must be taken seriously because it addresses many societal issues such as food security, preventive medicine, ecology, economy, women empowerment, love and faith,” said Lapus.

On her part, Henares-Esguerra says that her NGO is promoting a campaign for “The Seven Acts of Kindness” to instill social consciousness and responsibility on the part of young children to provide family support to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

DepEd will integrate IYCF practices as part of the curriculum. The importance of breastfeeding will be taught under Edukasyong Pantahan at Pangkabuhayan for elementary students and incorporated in Home Economics for secondary school.

To promote breastfeeding, the campaign will tap as role models Mikaela Fudolig, a 16-year old valedictorian and summa cum laude graduate of UP Batch 2007; Sierra Isabelle A. Castillo a UP college scholar and a UP Singing Ambassadors’ soprano; the Tagala Brothers known collectively as Vegetarian, Voices and Violins. All were breastfed from birth.

They are joined as role models by Susan Roth, a German doctor who chose the Philippines as her home country. Roth breastfeeds her two children in tandem from birth to present.

Lapus said DepEd will incorporate the teaching of the importance of breastfeeding starting school year 2009- 2010. He said that the breastfeeding policy is part of President Arroyo’s Hunger Mitigation Campaign because breastfeeding is the most far-reaching and cheapest strategy for the alleviation of poverty. Breastmilk, studies confirmed, ensures the life-long health and well-being, emotional stability and intellectual development of future generations.

“We will also mobilize our school health and nutrition personnel in communicating the importance of IYCF and breastfeeding to students, teachers and parents,” Lapus stressed.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with DepEd, CfB will be conducting advocacy seminars for teachers this summer. It will prepare supporting instructional materials, which will be used for the next school year.

The DepEd and CfB will also celebrate the National Breastfeeding Awareness Month every August and World Breastfeeding Week on August 1-7 annually in all public schools, as per Presidential Proclamation 1113.

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PRESS RELEASE