



For Immediate Release

Texas Senate Report Finds mCLASS:CIRCLE Software to be an Effective Tool in Improving the Readiness of Young Children for Learning and Education

New York City, November 30, 2004— A Texas Senate report on how to best prepare 3- and 4-year olds statewide for entering kindergarten recommends the use of PDA-based assessment software after positive results from a pilot program using software from Wireless Generation, the leading developer of pre K-12 observational assessment software. The report was written by The State Center for Early Childhood Development, known as CIRCLE (Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education) at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

During the pilot study, Wireless Generation's mCLASS™:CIRCLE™ software was used in 110 classrooms in child care centers, public school districts and Head Start centers in 11 communities to assess children's early literacy and language development. Researchers concluded that the use of PDA software helped educators pinpoint children's early literacy skills and needs, track their progress over time, and was more cost-effective than paper-based assessments. The pilot program has been expanded to 15 communities this fall.

The report documents results from the first year of a two-year study of the Texas Early Education Model, in which child care centers, independent school districts, and Head Start facilities work together to deliver early childhood programs with research-based curriculum, professional development and mentoring for teachers, and ongoing monitoring of children's progress.

“One of the most vital components of a successful early childhood program is the ability of teachers to identify what children know, and what they need to know to follow the path in becoming ready for school,” said Dr. Susan H. Landry, the study's lead researcher and director of CIRCLE. “Wireless Generation's mCLASS:CIRCLE software gives teachers the ability to see exactly where children are at regular intervals, and we saw firsthand how it helped teachers to become more thoughtful about planning activities to promote children's growth. Classrooms in our study that combined mCLASS:CIRCLE with strong curriculum and support for teachers achieved significantly greater gains in just three months than those where it was ‘business as usual.’”

Dr. Landry's vision is to have preK teachers monitor the growth of each child in cognitive, social, and emotional areas throughout the year, to assure that by the end of the year they are ready to enter kindergarten. Wireless Generation and CIRCLE collaborated to create the handheld computer-based version of CIRCLE's preK evaluation and observation tools. The mCLASS:CIRCLE assessment, given three times a year, helps early childhood educators to understand each child's degree of development in letter naming, vocabulary, and phonological awareness. mCLASS:CIRCLE software also enables teachers to create evolving portfolios that include anecdotal notes and observations of socio-emotional development, book and print awareness, and early writing skills.

While children interact with print materials, mCLASS:CIRCLE software allows teachers to record children's responses on the handheld unobtrusively, then receive immediate feedback and suggested activities for fostering early literacy development based on the needs of the whole class, groups of children, and individual children. The classroom activities are playful and purposeful, and do not require significant teacher preparation. With the push of one button to “sync” the handheld to a computer, information on each child is uploaded to a secure Web site, where teachers can view reports that assist in classroom planning.

“This study confirms how technology, properly applied, can benefit both educators and children,” said Larry Berger, Co-Founder and CEO of Wireless Generation. “The CIRCLE program is quickly becoming *the* model for the pre-K classroom of the future. It is an honor to learn that our software is making significant contributions to this future.”

For a full copy of the report, please go to <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/circle/projects/teem.htm>.

About Wireless Generation:

Wireless Generation is a privately held company, founded on the belief that teachers and school administrators would benefit from a new generation of highly mobile, easy-to-use software that supports their assessment and information management needs. The company offers a wide range of handheld observational assessment tools. Located in New York City, Wireless Generation can be reached at (212) 213-8177 and on the Web at www.wirelessgeneration.com. Wireless Generation, the Wireless Generation logo, mCLASS, and the mCLASS logo, among others, are the trademarks and/or service marks of Wireless Generation, Inc. All other trademarks, service marks, trade names and company names are the property of their respective owners.

About the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE):

Housed at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, CIRCLE is engaged in numerous research, community programs and training activities related to the goal of promoting quality learning environments for young children. Training in the early childhood component of Even Start family literacy is one aspect of their work. More information about CIRCLE and its work can be found on the Web at <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/circle/>.

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