## Learning Channel gets preschoolers ready

By Dan Rice
In its report "Ready to Learn: A
Mandate for the Nation" the Carnegie
Foundation for the Advancement of
Learning revealed that 35 percent of
America's children are not ready to
learn when they begin school. The
report stressed that better pre-school
preparation would make use of televipreparation would make use of televi-sion as a teacher.

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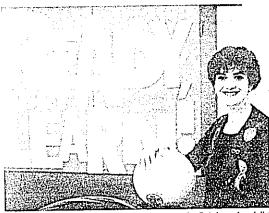
In direct response to the Carnegic report, cable's The Learning Channel has created Ready, Set. Learn!, a commercial-free block of weekday programming geared to give preschoolers a head start on reading and social interaction, Ready, Set. Learn! commences on Monday, Dec. 28. The block of six half-hour series has

The block of six hall-hour series has as its host children's singer/songwriter Rory. The cornerstone of the block is The Magic Box, a reading program designed by education pioneer Wendy Pie that uses "whole language" techniques.

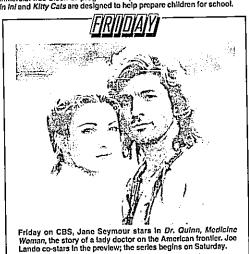
Pie that uses "whole language" techniques as well as a rap-singing Alphabet Soup Woman to hook 2- to 5-year-olds on the ladder to literacy. Bookmice reinforces the desire to read with its cast of puppets and people in a library setting. The fun of learning is the focus of Iris, the Happy Professor. The birdlike puppet Iris covers such subjects as the four seasons and the ocean with song and humor. The puppet players of Kitty Cats attend to problem solving and homing attend to problem solving and honing interpersonal skills, while the mulit-cultural adults of Join In! encourage cultural adults of 70th In-their young viewers to share activities with them, learning social lessons along the way. Finally, there's an old favorite. Zoobilee Zoo, offering animal-costumed actors who employ

animal-costumed actors who employ song, dance and magic to foster imagination in viewers.

The Learning Channel, with a subscriber base of 18 million in the U.S., hopes to pick up some foundation funding for Ready, Set, Learn!, just as similar public-television programs do. The revenues lost from the exclusion of commercials from the block will be substantial, but TLC's aggressive promotion of Ready, Set, Learn! to parents' groups and day-care centers is likely to attract new viewers to its regular state of commercially sponsored programming.



On Monday, The Learning Channel unveils Ready, Set, Learni, a daily, commercial-free block of programs for preschoolers. Shows like Bookmice, Join Int and Kitty Cats are designed to help prepare children for school.



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