

NEWS from the ND Department of Human Services and Early Explorers Head Start & Early Head Start Program

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Early Head Start Program receives grant to expand services in Ramsey County

BISMARCK, N.D. – State and local Head Start officials announced that the Devils Lake region is receiving a federal grant to expand the Early Head Start program. This will expand services to qualifying infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Ramsey County.

The Early Explorers Head Start and Early Head Start program received \$104,000 in start-up funding, which will enable the program to serve an additional 16 infants and toddlers. The program currently serves 50 expectant parents, infants, and toddlers in Ramsey and Wells counties.

Early Explorers Program Administrator Allison Driessen said, the expansion adds \$204,000 to the program's annual budget.

"In addition to meeting the needs of more children and parents, this expansion also has a positive economic impact. It will allow us to create six new jobs," Driessen said.

Early Head Start is a year-round program that provides support to families of infants and toddlers to enhance child development through healthy beginnings focusing on the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth of children.

"Experiences in the first three years become the building blocks for school readiness. We are going to be able to help more children acquire language and literacy skills, and develop a foundation of trusting relationships necessary for children to gain confidence as learners," Driessen said.

Early Explorers Head Start and Early Head Start is a grantee agency of the Towner Granville Upham School with administrative offices in Towner and Devils Lake. Early Head Start services are available to income-eligible families without cost.

"It has been almost 10 years since North Dakota received funding to expand Early Head Start program services," Driessen said. "We are excited to have this opportunity to serve more children and families in the Lake Region."

For more information about the Early Explorers Early Head Start and Head Start program, contact Driessen at 701-665-4431 or go online to www.earlyexplorers.org.

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