

## COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY REGION VI 0-5 EARLY HEAD START (JAMESTOWN)

**Target Population:** Early Head Start serves income eligible families with infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. Eligibility is based on 100% of the poverty level. Counties served are Eddy, Foster, Dickey, Griggs, Barnes, McIntosh, LaMoure and Stutsman. Current funded enrollment is 36.

**Application Process:** Applications are distributed to various programs and agencies throughout the 9 county area. Early Head Start is required to enroll 90% of the funded enrollment within the poverty guidelines and 10% with disabilities. Applications are taken all year and an ongoing waiting list is maintained.

### Options

**Home Base Option:** (20 slots) Early Head Start offers home base services to families in their home one time a week for 1 ½ hours each time. These visits are planned collaboratively with the parents to support their roles as primary caregivers of the child and to facilitate the child's optimal development. The home base option is for families who choose to stay home with their children, want to increase their knowledge of their child's development and strengthen their relationship between themselves and their infant or toddler. Home base also offers "Family Discovery Groups" twice a month to support child development by strengthening the parent-child relationship. Family Discovery Groups help parents to better understand child development; encourage parents to share their parenting challenges and joys with one another; provide activities for parents and children to enjoy together; offer structured and unstructured learning opportunities for both children and parents; and model successful strategies for engaging children and supporting their development.

**Center Base Option:** (16 slots) Early Head Start offers center base services to families at the facility Monday-Friday year round for 8 ¾ hours each day. There is one classroom for 8 infants and one classroom for 8 toddlers. Early Head Start does its best in making the environment home like and comfortable for the infants and toddlers. We offer many age appropriate activities for infants and toddlers to increase each child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Center base also offers "Family Discovery Groups" once a month to support parents' interaction with their children. In addition, staff and parents have quarterly home visits.

**Health and Wellness Services:** Health Services are coordinated to assist each Early Head Start family to create and maintain a positive relationship with a medical home. We help families track well-child visits and immunizations, and provide anticipatory guidance regarding infant and child health, nutrition, and development. Health, vision, hearing, and developmental screening results are monitored through Health Tracks or clinical records. We also arrange certain screenings, such as developmental and dental screens, on a regular basis during the program year. Finally, we provide ongoing health education for the entire family using newsletters, handouts, home visits, and parent training activities. There is a strong emphasis placed on wellness promotion and illness prevention in all areas of health.

**Prenatal Services:** Services to pregnant women are highly individualized to meet the unique needs of each enrolled pregnant woman. We assist in the establishment of a medical home, and encourage women to access other prenatal programs such as OPOP, WIC, and prenatal classes where available. In addition, the Health and Wellness Specialist visits each pregnant woman in her home on a schedule determined during the enrollment process. Using a prenatal curriculum and a wide variety of other resources, information on all areas of pregnancy and early infancy, including brain development and bonding/attachment, is available to pregnant women and their partners. Hands-on activities, such as bathing or diapering an infant, can be practiced at our Family Discovery House during Infant or Mom-Me Discovery Groups.

**Mental Health Services:** A wide variety of mental health services, including family counseling; couples counseling; play therapy; and Watch, Wait, and Wonder therapy are available to families through a partnership with three professional mental health consultants. Services are provided with an emphasis on wellness and prevention by focusing on education of child development and assistance in developing healthy relationships. Intervention services are also available when necessary to promote healthy change and growth. Common issues that are addressed include attachment and bonding, healthy family systems, positive discipline, child behavior concerns, healthy parental roles, separation anxiety, and social skill development. The mental health professionals are available to both staff and families through referrals or on-site visits that are scheduled on a regular basis.

**Family Services:** All parents are encouraged to participate in a variety of ways including policy making, program planning and implementation of activities at home and in the center environment. Early Head Start offers a variety of opportunities for parents to volunteer too. Staff works with parents to develop family goals and work toward achieving these goals on an individual family basis. Successful community partnerships are vital in linking families to appropriate services and resources.