



Family Services, Inc.

An affiliate of Sheppard & Enoch Pratt Foundation

For Immediate Release

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FAMILY SERVICES CELEBRATES EXPANSION OF DISCOVERY STATION CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

GAITHERSBURG, Maryland (October 1, 2010) - Early Head Start's Discovery Station Child Development Center, a program of Family Services, Inc., will officially celebrate the newly expanded school readiness and child development program on Thursday, October 7th at 9:00 am. The ribbon cutting guests will include individual and corporate supporters, as well as federal, state and county officials, community leaders, and individual donors.

This Early Head Start Expansion project was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and serves low-income families, many of whom are teens who speak a language other than English at home. A spacious new playground was built to promote active play every day.

The expansion project allows Early Head Start (EHS) to serve 72 additional infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in northern Montgomery County, Maryland, including Derwood and Olney. This brings the total number of children served by EHS to 147, with 28 in the Discovery Station child development center. The EHS expansion also included the hiring of 19 new staff members.

"The expanded Center allows us to provide comprehensive school readiness services to children who were not previously connected to any child development programs," said Mónica Ortiz, EHS Program Manager. "Being in the Early Head Start program will give them the opportunity to enter school ready to learn, and closer to the level of children who may have had other advantages."

The Discovery Station Child Development Center offers children a specialized and unique early educational experience in a safe, creative and supportive environment. Teachers plan developmentally appropriate lessons and classrooms are set up to foster creativity and free exploration. Infants and toddlers, for example, are provided activities that stimulate their sensory awareness, enhance language development, and encourage physical growth. Likewise, preschoolers are being prepared for Kindergarten through cognitive, language, physical, and social/emotional development.

According to Meredith Myers, FSI's Director of Early Childhood Services, "Discovery Station also provides comprehensive services to parenting teens in partnership with the local high schools. Historically, over 60% of pregnant teens drop out of high school, and we know that the children of these mothers are 10 times more likely to live in poverty. By offering high quality childcare and academic supports, we help reverse that pattern."

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