

## Early Childhood Programs Receive Funding Boost

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

The High Desert Education Service District was awarded a federal grant worth nearly \$277,000 to help four Deschutes County early childhood programs improve student achievement and build strong characters. The 18-month grant is through the U.S. Department of Education Foundations for Learning Program.

The grant provides funding to the Family Access Network, First Step to Success, Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education, and Healthy Beginnings.

Starting in mid-April, the Family Access Network (FAN) will add two advocates who will focus on families with pre-school-aged children. The FAN advocates' job is to help these families move toward self-sufficiency by accessing community services such as food, clothing, and shelter.

This grant will enable Healthy Beginnings to expand outreach to the Latino population in Deschutes County. Healthy Beginnings offers free accessible, educational, preventative screenings to children birth to five. Young children are welcome whether or not they have insurance coverage or are on the Oregon Health Plan.

The other early childhood programs, First Step to Success and Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education, will focus on providing services to children and their families that foster emotional, behavioral and social development.

By partnering with parents, teachers and other care providers, First Step to Success teaches children positive behavior. Through this program, children are able to increase academic engagement.

The Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education program provides specialized services to children with disabilities and their families to support the child's development.

The services provided by the grant will complement existing community resources and fill gaps in the current continuum of services. For more information on this grant, contact Vicki DiGregorio at 541-693-5675.

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