



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Grant Announced to Explore Community Based 4K** *Janesville Schools and Children's Service Society to Partner*

**Madison** – Janesville School District and Exchange Family Resource Center of the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin will partner with other local early education leaders to explore community based four-year-old kindergarten (4K) in Janesville with the help of a \$10,000 grant from the Early Education Matters Project of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

"The benefits of offering high quality early educational opportunities like 4K to children are well documented," said Charity Eleson, executive director of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. "Using the resources and expertise that already exist in the early education community, community based 4K offers rich potential for children, parents and communities to help children get prepared to succeed in school and beyond."

In 1984, Wisconsin reinstated 4K in state statute but did not make the program mandatory in Wisconsin schools. Currently, well over half (56 percent) of Wisconsin's elementary school districts have 4K programs, but 182 do not.

Community based 4K has become an increasingly popular way to offer 4K and address some of the problems associated with starting a new 4K program like start up funding, space issues in schools, minimizing transitions between programs for children and concern by local early education facilities about competition.

"The School District of Janesville is excited to have the opportunity to continue developing our collaborative model involving our early childhood community stakeholders. All four-year-olds in our community regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status should have access to high quality early learning experiences. Our focus for this grant opportunity is to bring community members, parents, day care providers, teachers and other interested parties together for a conference to learn about four-year old kindergarten in a non-threatening, non-judgmental environment. The grant will help us achieve this goal!" said Karen Schulte, Director of Student Services, Janesville Public Schools.

Since 2004 the Early Education Matters Project has given out 21 grants to communities from every corner of Wisconsin. In addition to Janesville, grants were given to Pecatonica Area, Manitowoc, Stevens Point, Waupun and Milwaukee.

*Early Education Matters is a project of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families in collaboration with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, the University of Wisconsin- Extension, Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership and Milwaukee Public Schools. The project is funded through the generous support of the Joyce Foundation.*