

For Immediate Release
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Grant Announced to Explore Community Based 4K *Manitowoc Public Schools and Head Start to Partner*

Madison – Manitowoc Public Schools and CESA 7 Head Start and Early Head Start will partner with other local early education leaders to explore community based four-year-old kindergarten (4K) 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.

“We are so pleased to be the recipient of this grant. It will help us achieve our goal of providing all four year olds in Manitowoc and Two Rivers with educational experiences in a variety of program options aimed at similar outcomes. The grant will support staff development opportunities and planning efforts for private preschool providers, parents, and staff from two neighboring districts to collaborate and serve young children together,” said Marcia Flarety, Assistant Director of Student Learning Manitowoc Public Schools.

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

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families: Celebrating 125 years
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