



**For Immediate Release**  
**July 10, 2006**

**Contact: Julie Laundrie**  
**608-284-0580 ext 303**

## **Grant Announced to Explore Community Based 4K**

*Stevens Point Schools and Mid-Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral to Partner*

**Madison** – Stevens Point Area Public Schools and Mid-Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Inc, 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 Elson, 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.

“Every child deserves an opportunity to excel in the educational system. The exceptional community group that is studying four year old kindergarten models on behalf of the children in the greater Stevens Point area is focused on providing equal access for every four year old whose family desires this opportunity. The grant that has been awarded to this industrious group will be a key investment in our youth with a payback that is priceless,” said Bette Lang, Superintendent, Stevens Point Area Public School District.

Since 2004 the Early Education Matters Project has given out 21 grants to communities from every corner of Wisconsin. In addition to Stevens Point, grants were given to Janesville, Pecatonica Area, Manitowoc, 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**  
*Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count*