

TWO RIVERS HEAD START AGENCY SUPPORTS AREA FAMILIES

— Sandy Conrad
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Administrative offices for Two Rivers Head Start Agency are located at 1661 Landmark Road in Aurora (630/264-1444). A staff of qualified, degreed teachers and Home Visitors is overseen by Agency Director Diane Lacey who is assisted by a 15 member Board of Directors consisting of professionals and a Parent Policy Council of 1 member for every 50 children who are elected at each center. A large administrative staff consists of Program-Education, Family Services, Literacy, Professional Development, Health Services, Disability and Job Training Coordinators, Case workers and office support personnel.



The agency is funded to serve 888 income-eligible children in a five county area which includes Kane, Kendall and DeKalb, all of which have towns which are served by the Fox Valley News Shopper. The programs of the agency are supported through three grants: the Federal



Head Start National Pre-School program for three to five years olds, the Federal Early Head Start program for pregnant moms and children from birth to three, and a Community Service Block Grant which is a Federal program overseen by the Illinois Development Commission.

Head Start is a program for three to five year olds. Early Head Start serves pregnant moms and children from birth to three.

Early Head Start recognizes the importance of a child's development that occurs during their first three years. Programs are defined to promote healthy growth in the areas of gross/fine motor skills, language cognition and social interactions. The infant/toddler program is open year round from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Parents of children in the program must be

working at least 30 hours per week or attending school full time or a combination of both.

The agency offers Head Start programs for children three to five years old which provide School Readiness with a Research-Based Curriculum at eight different centers in the area. It is a comprehensive child development program which helps children develop socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically through a variety of hands-on learning experiences, nutritious meals and snacks, field trips and family-child activities. Parents can choose from half day, full day or full year enrollment.

Maritza Garcia, Community Services Block Grant Coordinator, explained the various benefits of the grant which include one time emergency financial assistance for payment of rent and water bills, food pantries in Elgin and Aurora, Outreach referral, job and on the job training, a back to school program which provides funds for the purchase of new shoes for K-12 students, a scholarship program, a child care payment subsidy, GED, medical and transportation programs and assistance to seniors and the disabled.

In addition to the food pantries listed above, there are several others throughout the area and a schedule is available which lists the days and times of service at each location. There is a Parents' Store in Aurora; they can earn points by attending mandatory meetings and doing activities with kids which can be "spent" at the store.

Call to learn the many ways in which Two Rivers Head Start Agency, an effective advocate for children and families affected by poverty, helps build families!