

Date 3/12/15

Community Action Awarded \$500,000 Annual Grant For Early Head Start Prog.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has announced the award of an Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership grant to Garrett County Community Action.

This \$500,000 grant capitalizes on existing child care capacity and infrastructure to improve access to high quality early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers in low-income families. ACF developed the grants to encourage innovative collaboration between new or existing Early Head Start grantees and child care providers.

"As the mother of young children, early learning is a big part of my personal life," said HHS secretary Sylvia M. Burwell. "We're awarding \$500,000 annually to this organization to help ensure more children in Garrett County will benefit from high-quality early childhood efforts. As a result, we expect

that 20 additional children a year will be able to access Early Head Start. That's a lot of young lives changed, and a lot of impact delivered."

"Research shows the first
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Awarded Grant

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three years are critical for brain development, and Early Head Start provides high-quality early care and learning opportunities for our most vulnerable young children," said ACF acting assistant secretary Mark Greenberg. "These grants will help support working families by providing a full-day, full-year program for young children."

Infants and toddlers in the new program will receive developmentally enriching caregiving, promoting their physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, and preparing them for future growth. In addition, this program will offer support to parents in their roles as primary caregivers and teachers, helping them move toward self-sufficiency.

According to ACF, Early Head Start program requires significant support from the community, including matching funds, much of which is delivered in kind. These programs work most effectively when local businesses and community organizations work together to support these most vulnerable children. Public and private entities throughout the state are invited to embrace these new programs and be part of the solution for early childhood care and education.

"We are pleased to partner with communities from all over the country to expand high quality early learning opportunities for children who need it most," said ACF deputy assistant secretary for early childhood development Linda Smith. "By providing the fundamental services young children need, we will improve their chances

to reach their full potential." President Barack Obama first proposed the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership program in his 2013 State of the Union address, when he put forward a comprehensive plan to support high-quality early education for all children from birth through school age.