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## **WCCS enrolling for Head Start**

As pencils are sharpened, buses start moving and temperatures begin to fall, millions of students across the country head back to school. This year, that group will include 324 children served in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs of WCCS Early Learning Centers.

For more than 45 years, Head Start has been providing children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally and physically. This federally funded, comprehensive program has been proven to prepare children for kindergarten and have a lasting impact on their lives.

“National research has shown that Head Start is a great investment in our society’s future,” said Lisa Cayard, Director. “Head Start graduates have larger vocabularies, better test scores, more stable families, improved overall health and brighter futures.”

Substantial research by educators, psychologists and other social scientists shows that Head Start students, as they grow up, experience long term effects on their school careers as well as their future employment and success. A California study showed that society receives as much as \$9 in benefits for every \$1 invested in Head Start, in large part because graduates of the program are more likely to be self-sufficient throughout their lives. Other studies have found that Head Start children are significantly less likely to commit crimes than their siblings who did not participate in Head Start. Research is also suggesting that Head Start reduces childhood obesity.

“Without a doubt, Head Start is a wise investment in our community,” said Ms. Cayard. “Education breaks the cycle of poverty and the acceptance and caring they receive in our classrooms stimulate these children toward greater self-confidence and a lifelong love of learning.”

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Parent involvement is a key component of the Head Start program. WCCS Early Learning Centers empowers parents to become leaders and supporters of their children's educational experience. Research involving Head Start parents shows they are more satisfied with their lives, more confident and healthier also.

"Parents are any child's first educators," notes Cayard. "This is truly a partnership which benefits the entire family."

Head Start serves low-income children ages 3 to 5. Early Head Start serves pregnant women and children from birth to age 3. Options include full and half-day classes and/or home visitation services. Eligible families are those whose total annual income does not exceed 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, which is \$22,050 for a family of four. For each additional family member, the eligible income limit increases by \$3,750.

Child care is also offered for families of any income level at our Lebanon and South Lebanon sites. Centers are accredited by NAEYC, and the Lebanon and Franklin sites have earned 3-star Step Up to Quality ratings.

**WCCS** Early Learning Centers are now enrolling for the 2010-2011 school year. Call (513) 695-2213 to enroll a child, or visit us on the web at [www.wccsi.org](http://www.wccsi.org).

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