



Eastern Connecticut State University

NEWS

August 29, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Edward Osborn, Director of University Relations

(860) 465-5043 or Osborne@easternct.edu

or Dwight Bachman

Public Relations Officer

(860) 465-5114 or Bachman@easternct.edu

Eastern Awarded U.S. Department of Education Grant

Willimantic, Conn. – Eastern Connecticut State University’s Center for Early Childhood Education has been awarded an “Early Reading First” grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Eastern will receive \$1,409,697 this fall to begin the three-year Community Partners for Early Literacy project.

“This Early Reading First grant is illustrative of the training and research mission of Eastern’s Center for Early Childhood Education and the University’s commitment to the early care and education of young children in the Windham community,” said Patricia A. Kleine, dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies.

The Center for Early Childhood Education is a research and training institute located on Eastern’s Willimantic campus. The center will utilize the grant funds to improve the language and literacy skills of approximately 506 preschool-aged children in Windham by providing professional development and mentoring to teachers in 15 preschool classrooms in the Windham Public Schools and at Eastern’s Child and Family Development Resource Center. The project will include a particular focus on developing the language and literacy skills of children for whom English is a second language, including through the development of model bilingual classrooms.

The project also will enhance literacy activities in children’s homes through a comprehensive family literacy program. The project will use the advanced video technology of the Center for Early Childhood Education to create video archives and trainings on research-based early literacy practices.

“We are thrilled to receive this federal grant to help Eastern make a positive difference in the

-over-

language development of preschool children in our local community,” said Eastern President Elsa Núñez. “Language proficiency is fundamental to learning to read. These funds will help us leverage Eastern’s resources to have a significant impact among Windham’s preschool population.”

Julia DeLapp is the director of the Center for Early Childhood Education. She will be working with Maureen Ruby and Ann Anderberg, assistant professors in the Department of Education at Eastern, who will serve as co-principal investigators for the project. Ruby is a specialist in reading, learning disabilities and early literacy assessment. She has served as a literacy facilitator for Reading First and other literacy initiatives and as a research consultant for Haskins Laboratory at Yale University. Anderberg is a specialist in bilingual and bicultural education who is fluent in English and Spanish. Before joining Eastern’s faculty this fall, Anderberg served as director of grants and developmental programs and director of bilingual programs for Windham Public Schools.

The Early Reading First Program was authorized by No Child Left Behind legislation to improve the school readiness of young children in the United States, particularly those from low-income families. It is hoped that those early childhood education programs serving preschool-age children that receive support through the grant will become centers of educational excellence. From nearly 400 Early Reading First grant proposals, only 31 agencies and public school districts throughout the United States were awarded Early Reading First grants this fall.

For more information, contact Julia DeLapp, Center for Early Childhood Education, at (860) 465-0687.

###

Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state’s public liberal arts university. Eastern serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.