

Press Release



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District 303 Early Childhood Program Named “Award of Excellence” Winner State Award Cites Excellence in Inclusion for All Students

January 31, 2017

District 303’s Early Childhood Program has been designated by the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development as a winner of the Award of Excellence. The Award of Excellence is the highest level of the quality rating and improvement system in the State of Illinois, and recognizes research-based best practices in specific content areas. This Award of Excellence demonstrates successful implementation of high-quality programming of inclusion practices for preschool age children.

Inclusion is a basic principle in early care and education. This principle guides policies and practices that are embedded throughout early childhood programs and classrooms, ensuring that young children with special needs are cared for and educated alongside their peers who do not have special needs. Federal law protects the rights of children and adults with disabilities and more specifically, requires that pre-school students be served and educated in the least restrictive environment possible with typically developing peers.

District 303’s Early Childhood Program had previously been designated as a member of the Gold Circle of Quality by ExceleRate Illinois. The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs which have demonstrated quality on all fifteen standards of early childhood instruction, as validated by a state approved assessor. Gold Circle programs meet or exceed specific quality benchmarks on learning environment, instructional quality, and all program administrative standards; group size and staff/child ratios; staff qualifications; and professional development. ExceleRate Illinois is under the direction of the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education.

District 303 conducts its Early Childhood Program at four school sites, Davis Primary, Ferson Creek Elementary, Fox Ridge Elementary, and Norton Creek Elementary. For more information about the District 303 Early Childhood Program visit www.d303.org or contact the Early Childhood office at (331) 228-4834.

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