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## Early Head Start at GSU

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For Immediate Release

## Early Head Start at GSU

University Park, IL, March 30, 2010 - The Family Development Center at Governors State University will offer Early Head Start, a free, comprehensive program for low-income families, beginning in June 2010.

The Early Head Start program at GSU provides specialized support services to qualified pregnant mothers and children, up to their third birthday, who live in Will County, east of I-57, and the immediate families of GSU staff and students regardless of where they live. Participants need not be students at GSU.

"The benefits of Early Head Start program can be seen in the children and families who participate," said Carol Morrison, Executive Director of the Family Development Center. "Children have higher cognitive abilities and better language development. Babies are born healthier, parents practice better parenting skills, and families are stronger as a result."

A key component of the Early Head Start program is the childcare services provided to parents who are working or in school, Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Infants and toddlers in the Early Head Start Program attend the state-of-the-art, fully licensed Family Development Center.

"The adult-child ratio in our childcare program is limited to one adult to every four children with only eight children per room," explained Morrison. "And each room will be staffed by a fully qualified early childhood educator."

Formula, meals, snacks, and diapers are also included in childcare services. A registered nurse is on staff to monitor the children's healthcare needs.

Additional services of the program include a prenatal program for pregnant women, home visits from a child development specialist, educational opportunities for pregnant women and parents, and support services linking families to social services in the community.

"By providing prenatal services, high quality child care for infants and toddlers, and parent education to pregnant women and parents, we will reduce premature births, increase school readiness, and support young families," said Dr. Deborah Bordelon, Dean of the College of Education. "Governors State is pleased to offer this invaluable service to our families and provide an additional economic boost to our local economy."

Funding for the Early Head Start program at GSU comes from a two-year, \$1.7 million grant from the Department of Health and Human Services as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The grant will enable the FDC to serve 72 families.

The Family Development Center is located on the campus of Governors State University, 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois. For more information about the Early Head Start Program at the GSU Family Development Center, call (708) 235-7300 or visit [www.govst.edu/children](http://www.govst.edu/children).