



**For Immediate Release**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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**Grand Opening Celebration for the Educare Early Learning Center in White Center**

**WHAT:** **Educare Early Learning Center** Grand Opening Celebration

**WHO:** The entire White Center community and supporters of the Educare Center, including children and families, caregivers, funders, partners, educators, builders and national, state and local leaders

**WHEN:** **Saturday, March 27, 2010**  
**1:00-4:00 p.m.**

**Ceremony:**  
1:00 –1:45 p.m. Opening Remarks and Recognitions

**Open House**  
2:00– 4:00 pm. Tours and Activities for Children and Families

**WHERE:** **Educare Early Learning Center**  
625 SW 100<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, WA 98146  
(Adjacent to White Center Heights Elementary School)

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On Saturday, March 27, there will be a grand opening of the Educare Early Learning Center and a celebration of the years of collaborative planning and the public private partnership that brought this innovative and nationally recognized program to the White Center community. The event will include a ceremony to recognize key partners and contributors, followed by building tours and activities for young children and their families. National, state and community leaders in early learning will take part in the ceremony.

## **About the Educare Early Learning Center**

White Center is now the 10<sup>th</sup> community in the United States to have one of the country's most respected models of early learning and care. The Educare Early Learning Center also serves as the hub for the White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI), a community-wide effort to improve early learning for all children in the White Center/Boulevard Park neighborhoods.

The Educare Early Learning Center offers full-day, year-round infant/toddler/preschool programs for 134 children from income eligible families and for children with disabilities. The Center also offers caregiver and educator resources and professional development programs to enhance the quality of early learning and care in all settings to prepare ALL children in the community to be successful in school and life.

All young children in the White Center community—from newborns to children five years old—can benefit from the Center's services. As part of WCELI, a Thrive by Five Washington demonstration community, the Center will potentially impact early learning in the state and nation.

## **The Facility**

Adjacent to the White Center Heights Elementary School, the Educare Early Learning Center is part of the King County Housing Authority's Greenbridge community, a 96-acre redevelopment of its Park Lake Homes Public Housing. The 44,000 square foot LEED certified building features six preschool classrooms, four infant/toddler classrooms, training rooms and community gathering spaces.

The Center was built through a strong public-private partnership of philanthropic foundations, individual donors and county, state and federal grants and programs.

Private foundations include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation who provided significant support, the Buffet Early Childhood Fund, George Kaiser Family Foundation, Bounce Network, Thrive By Five Washington, The Norcliffe Foundation, Paul Allen Family Foundation, The Seattle Foundation and the Norman Archibald Charitable Foundation. A Kresge Challenge grant of \$600,000 will help close out the capital campaign.

Federal and state programs providing capital support include the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Governor's capital budget, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Head Start Program, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, and the King County Housing Authority. U.S. Senator Patty Murray, State Representative Sharon Nelson and State Senator Joe McDermott helped to secure portions of national and state public funding. Federal AARA funds of \$2.6 million over two years are making it possible to serve additional infants, toddlers and 3 to 5 year olds and their families.

In addition, the National Development Council, US Bank and ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia provided resources and financial expertise to maximize New Market Tax Credit financing for the center.

The center was designed by Miller Hayashi Architects and built by Kassel Construction. Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) operates the Center in collaboration with the White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI) and Thrive by Five Washington.

### **The Educare Model**

The Educare Early Learning Center is the 10<sup>th</sup> Educare Center to open in the United States and is part of a growing national network of Educare early learning programs that combine Head Start and Early Head Start with full-day child care services.

Children receive continuity of care by having the same highly qualified teacher for several years. This helps children develop secure relationships and contributes to school-readiness.

Other core features of the Educare Program are:

- Research-based practices and strategies
- Small class size and high staff-child ratios
- Focus on language and literacy
- Emphasis on social-emotional development to promote school readiness
- On-site family support services
- Highly trained teachers and intensive staff development

The Educare program gives priority to children from low income working families receiving state child care assistance and to homeless families, as well as foster children and children with disabilities.

### **About The White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI)**

The Center serves as a hub for the White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI), a

partnership of community members and public and private organizations that work to create comprehensive child development and family support services to help all children in the community begin school ready to succeed. WCELI provides education and support for parents, caregivers, and child care and early learning staff.

WCELI is one of two Thrive by Five Washington early learning demonstration communities in the state, modeling strategies and approaches that can be replicated in other communities to improve early learning statewide.

Primary partners in WCELI are Child Care Resources, Highline Public Schools, Open Arms Perinatal Services, Public Health – Seattle & King County, Puget Sound Educational Service District, Educare/Bounce Learning Network and Thrive by Five Washington. The partnership is supported by grants from Thrive by Five Washington and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Examples of Educare and WCELI services**

- The Educare Early Learning Center serves infants, toddlers and children ages 3 to 5 years old in full-day, full-year programs.
  
- Birth and outreach doulas are working with pregnant mothers through birth and until the children are 2 years old to make sure they have the support they need in these important early years of a child's life. Outreach doula home visits are provided for Hispanic and Somali women in their own languages.
  
- More than 100 families are receiving intensive home visiting services from public health nurses for pregnant mothers and their children through age two.
  
- Extensive professional development is provided for licensed child care providers and early learning professionals to enhance the quality of child care and early learning throughout the community.
  
- Play and Learn groups are offered in various locations for family, friend and neighbor caregivers and young children where they can play and learn together to enhance home learning environments and increase the skills and knowledge of parents as first teachers of their children.

**For More Information**

To learn more about the Educare Early Learning Center, the White Center Early Learning Initiative, or Puget Sound Educational Service District, visit [www.wceli.org](http://www.wceli.org) and [www.psesd.org](http://www.psesd.org), or call 425-917-7605. To arrange for visits and interviews, please contact Joan Tritchler, 425-917-7605; [jtritchler@psed.org](mailto:jtritchler@psed.org).