

Community Action



Early Head Start Child Development Center

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility

A partnership between Community Action
and the Oregon Department of Corrections



The Early Head Start child development center is located at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. The Early Head Start program is designed to be supportive, nurturing and responsive to the needs of families. This program ensures the kind of warm and continuous relationships between caregivers, mothers and children that are crucial to learning and development for infants and toddlers. Based on current research, this program enhances maternal bonding and will prepare the mother for transition into the community as she resumes parenting.



Effects of Separation

Mothers experience guilt and anxiety over separation and worry about losing their children permanently. There is a connection between maintaining family ties during incarceration and lower rates of recidivism for the mothers. Maintaining a family connection also results in a more successful reunification upon release. As termination of parental rights has become more prevalent, contact and visitation between mothers and children has decreased and recidivism has increased. Separation by incarceration is commonly used to justify termination of parental rights because of the mother's unavailability to parent (Gabel, 1995).

Ability to Parent

Fifty-seven percent of mothers plan to parent upon release (Mumola, 2000). In spite of incarceration, mothers value their parental identity and remain committed to their parental duties. When women have hope of rejoining with their children upon release, they continue to mother from the inside through visits, calls and letters (Gabel, 1995). They show concern and empathy regarding the effects of their incarceration on their children and have an interest in becoming effective parents. Through non-judgmental support, assistance with transition planning, parenting classes and increased exposure to their children, incarcerated mothers are more likely to reenter the community and successfully parent their children.

"There are two ways to look at our situation: As a setback or as a starting point. We choose starting point." —Laura, Inmate/Mother

Services Provided

This program offers support to both the incarcerated mother and the family with whom the child resides and provides an opportunity for the incarcerated mother to visit with her child 3-1/2 hours per day, 2 days per week. Early Head Start comprehensive services include education, health and nutrition services to children, family support to mothers and caregivers through individual home visits, and includes transition planning for the child upon the mother's release. Early intervention through high quality programs enhances children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development and enables parents to be better caregivers and teachers to their children.



Eligibility

A mother must meet Early Head Start and Oregon Department of Corrections requirements to be eligible:

- Be pregnant or have a child aged birth to 3 years
- Complete the application process by submitting the necessary documents: copy of the child's birth certificate and immunization record
- Meet Department of Corrections minimum custody level requirements and outside perimeter eligibility
- Plan to have contact with their child upon release
- Have a caregiver who supports the child's participation in the Early Head Start program (transportation to the facility twice weekly and monthly caregiver home visits)
- Have completed, be enrolled or on the wait list for Parenting Inside/Out classes, prison sponsored parenting classes
- Actively participate in their Corrections' Plan (program/treatment/work)

Application Process

Upon entry into the Minimum Facility, the mother completes the Early Head Start (EHS) Screening Form.

- The mother completes and submits the Early Head Start (EHS) application to her institution counselor.
- The EHS Family Advocate meets with potential moms to determine eligibility and complete the application process.
- Once transportation and participation are arranged with the child's caregiver, the application is forwarded to the mom's Corrections' Counselor for review by the Work Release Committee.
- Once reviewed by the committee, the application is forwarded to the superintendent for final approval for participation in Early Head Start.

Our Promise

*Community Action changes peoples lives,
embodies the spirit of hope,
improves communities & makes America
a better place to live.*

*We care about the entire community
and are dedicated to helping individuals
help themselves & each other.*

Early Head Start Child Development Center at

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility

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Community Action is funded in part by the Department of Housing and Urban Development via the Washington County Community Development Block Grant Program.

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05/2004