

## Oakland Family Services Is Asked To Serve As The Early Learning Community For Oakland County

Oakland Family Services was selected by the United Way for Southeastern Michigan (UWSEM) to be the Early Learning Community “hub” for Oakland County. The purpose of the Early Learning Community is to improve the quality of care provided to children being cared for by relatives or other unlicensed individuals in the home.

Nearly one-third of Michigan children entering kindergarten do not recognize numbers and letters, cannot follow direction and lack social skills. Research has demonstrated that children who attend quality pre-school are more successful in school and other life outcomes, such as being employed and earning higher salaries, staying married, and not being incarcerated. However, many children do not have the opportunity to attend quality early education programs like Oakland Family Services’ Children’s Learning Center. Often because of the lack of financial resources, working parents leave their infants and pre-school aged children in the care of relatives, friends or neighbors in a home setting. Unfortunately, these children are not typically provided with educational activities that contribute to their verbal, cognitive, physical and social development, thus leaving them less prepared to succeed in school.



Oakland Family Services will bring its expertise in early childhood development and education to this initiative. Eighty-nine percent of children who attend preschool in our Children’s Learning Center are successfully promoted each year through to the second grade.

Early Learning Community services will begin in February in Pontiac and March in Waterford. Oakland Family Services staff will teach child care providers interactive activities to engage children in learning and play, provide training on child development issues and serve as mentors in the home through modeling. A resource lending library will offer books, tapes, and educational and developmental toys.

Oakland Family Services was selected as part of our Family Service Alliance for Southeastern Michigan (Alliance). Alliance partner Starfish Family Services is a “hub” for Wayne County, and Macomb Family Services and Family Services Inc. of Detroit and Wayne County will provide this service in Macomb County and Detroit, respectively. The Alliance allows for regional delivery of Early Learning Communities across the Tri-County.