

Early Childhood Special Education Services at Hickory Grove Dunlap CUSD #323

- **Early Childhood Screening Procedures SEAPCO sponsored**
- **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program SEAPCO/CUSD #323 Sponsored**
- **Bright Futures/Blended ECSE Program Bright Futures/CUSD #323 Sponsored**

Early Childhood Screening Procedures

Initially, the Special Education Association of Peoria County (SEAPCO) preschool screening team provides free developmental screenings for all preschool children (ages birth-five years) living in Peoria County excluding Peoria District #150. Screening staff make parents aware of the results of the screenings within two weeks. The results determine screening team recommendations as follows: **1.** If the child is developmentally age appropriate, then the team encourages parents to enroll their child in a parental choice preschool or prekindergarten; **2.** If a child needs speech/language which could be combined with occupational and/or physical therapy services, staff assist parents in receiving these services in their school districts; and, **3.** If the screening team determine that they need more information about a child's development, they refer the child with parental permission to a SEAPCO play-based assessment team, (see below). If you have any questions about SEAPCO screening procedures, please contact Gerri Leigh, Parent Educator at the SEAPCO Office, 309-697-0880, ext 206. To schedule a Pre-School Screening appointment, please contact Ashleigh Kleist, Pre-School Screening Scheduler, at 309-697-0880, ext 200.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program

Hickory Grove Elementary in Dunlap School District #323 currently houses and provides transportation for two Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classrooms for children three-six years of age* under the direction of Special Education Association of Peoria County (SEAPCO).

Children are assessed and enter ECSE services as follows:

1. through a play-based assessment team comprised of a special education teacher, psychologist, school social worker, speech therapist, occupational therapist and/or physical therapist, and vision or hearing therapist if needed; **2.** from a referral through an early intervention (0-3) program or, **3.** as an ECSE transfer student from another school district. Special education professionals stated above with skills and expertise in early childhood implement the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Part B, by supporting the needs of young children and families in these classrooms.

Specifically, each classroom can support two- ½ day programs (2 1/2 hours each) Monday-Friday with 20 students, 10 in a.m. and 10 in p.m. Each classroom has one special education teacher and a minimum of one teaching assistant.

The special education teachers focus on developing students' speech/language, communication, social interaction, exploration and problem solving and, independent skills. Students with more intense needs in speech/language, fine and gross motor and vision/hearing receive these related services both within, the classrooms and as pull-out services. Teaching staff utilize Assessment Evaluation and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS) assessments to determine individual student progress and, they also integrate AEPS curriculum.

***Please note: A child cannot be age 6 when program starts. Child must turn age 6 after ECSE program has started.**

If you have any questions about the ECSE program or classrooms, please contact Pam Carpentier, Special Education Administrator at the SEAPCO Office, 309-697-0880 ext.213, pcarpentier@seapco.org. If you have any district questions/concerns including transportation, please contact Jeremy Etnyre, Hickory Grove Elementary Principal, at 309-243-8711, jetnyre@dunlapcusd.net or, contact Ali Bond, Director of Student Services at Dunlap District #323 Office, 309-691-3955, abond@dunlapcusd.net.

Bright Futures Blended/ECSE

Peoria County Bright Futures is a Preschool For All Program funded through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education. Hickory Grove Elementary School works in collaboration with Peoria County Bright Futures to provide two blended classrooms, AM and PM. Each class is made up of 10 students from Bright Futures and 5 students with special needs (IEPs) totaling 15 students per class. Bright Futures' students must be 3 by September 1st to enter into the program.

To qualify for Bright Futures, children must be screened. All children are screened using the Brigance and Fluharty to determine any developmental needs and/or speech and language delays. Once qualified for the classroom, children with the highest needs will be placed in the classroom. Each Bright Futures classroom has one lead teacher and one paraprofessional assistant teacher with additional assistants being provided based on students' needs. Screenings and assessments with SEAPCO can help determine if a child needs an IEP.

If a child has an IEP and receives speech/language and/or OT/PT services only, he/she could qualify for Bright Futures; however, if a child has further delays but is not functioning significantly below age level, he/she could be considered for the Bright Futures/ECSE blended model.

The Bright Futures classroom is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC accredited programs are among the top 10% of preschool classrooms in the nation. This means the students are part of a child-centered classroom, rich in hands-on learning experiences. Creative Curriculum helps the students experience meaningful center time play, project learning, and small group work. Children work, grow, develop, learn at their own pace and, teachers are able to meet the individual needs of each child.

If you have any questions regarding Bright Futures, please contact: Erin Stout, Program Director, at the Bright Futures office, 686-8590 or at estout@phcusd325.net.

If you would like a child screened for Bright Futures, please call the main office at 686-8590.