

Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc.
**Center of Excellence: SEEDS Project
and the Incredible Years Curriculum**



The Centers of Excellence program was established by the Office of Head Start in the 'Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007'. Funds for "The Centers of Excellence" project were appropriated in 2009. Based on local program performance and the recommendation of state governors, ten Centers of Excellence were selected to receive grant funds for the implementation a five-year project. Applicants not only received the designation as one of ten Centers of Excellence in the United States Head Start system, they also were given the opportunity to disseminate best practices to Head Start, Early Head Start and other early education programs.

The process for the PIC/Westmoreland-Fayette, Inc, Head Start/Early Head Start began in November 2009 when, Governor Ed Rendell selected the program to compete at the national level for the National Center of Excellence Programs. This nomination was awarded to HS/EHS Fayette County on the basis of innovative practices in delivering early education services as well as the ongoing partnerships with the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in the required areas of quality improvement, sound partnerships, comprehensive programming, staff competency and participation in collaborative systems oversight through the Early Learning Council and its various communities.

In response to requests from parents and feedback from the community, PIC/Head Start selected a project to improve the education, health and overall well-being of the total family. Specifically, the project is focused on improving the children's social-emotional development, using the SEEDS Project (Social Emotional Early Developmental Success). To achieve this goal, the SEEDS Project funding will be used to develop staff resources within the program to assist children, their parents, and other community agencies involved in the Early Childhood Education system with preventing, reducing, and treating aggression and inappropriate behaviors in children. As a result, the outcomes include promotion of children's social, emotional, and academic competence.

The guiding tool for developing positive social-emotional development is the Incredible Years (IY) Curriculum. The IY principles and materials are used to educate parents and early childhood educators on best practices of social and emotional development in children birth through age eight.

The SEEDS program is beginning the second year of training and dissemination of positive social-emotional tools to parents and early childhood educators and caregivers. Parents are enrolled in 14 weeks of experiential learning which results in improved parenting as well as peer support.

For more information visit Center of Excellence: SEEDS web page www.privateindustrycouncil.com and/or visit Center of Excellence: SEEDS at facebook.com/coe.seeds.

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*Head Start | Early Head Start
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