

Faribault Early Childhood Facility

Three Rivers Community Action, Head Start, Faribault Early Childhood Family Education and Early Childhood Special Education had been working together to create a family center where early childhood and adult services are co-located. Head Start and the Early Childhood program were facing many of the same dilemmas: no ability to expand services in a licensable space; no space available to purchase without major renovations; and, the cost of constructing a new facility was hampered by locating affordable land that was within the city limits. As a result the programs joined forces and began to discuss the benefits of co-locating: sharing resources; expanding programming for families in a central location versus scattered sites. As a result of this effort we were able to expand services at our current location (shopping mall) in September of 1997. Other programs located within the building were Adult Basic Education/GED/ESL, Alternative Learning Center and the Workforce Center/PIC. Head Start offered 4 center base classes, 1 home base and 1 "Birth to Three" program. We had available to families a parent education room, a lending library, a kitchen, large motor area, playground and sibling care. Other services offered were ECFE classes, EC:SE classes, Stepping Stones, Baby Stop, Teen & Young Parent, Families Growing Together, and Early Childhood Screenings. In addition to early childhood programs, Three Rivers Community Action offered Energy Assistance, Home Delivered Meals, Crisis Programs, Family Development, Homeless Program, Transitional Housing and linkages to other community services/resources.

In March 2001, the Faribault School District made a decision to move all district programming out of the Town Square Mall and move into other existing buildings owned by the district. Unfortunately, this has had a dramatic impact on our co-located services and ability to provide families with the one-stop concept. The actual move for the district occurred in July and we began a new venture of continuing collaboration without the benefit of co-location.

Since that time, we continue to work on ways to co-locate programming. The intent was to build onto McKinley Elementary to house a multitude of programming to be able to again provide the one stop concept to families within the community.

Since 2001 we have had plans drawn up to build onto the McKinley School and have formed a group "United for Kids" (formally developed as a result of funding from the Minnesota Initiative Foundations Early Childhood Initiatives).

The mission of the group is: **To develop a state of the art facility with programming for families 0-5 years old in the Faribault area that will provide a seamless delivery of resources to families.**

The facility would include: ECFE, ECSE, Head Start, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc., wrap around child care and other community based programs like Adult Basic Education/ESL, Public Health/WIC/Baby Stop, Migrant Head Start, etc.

It is anticipated that currently over 600 children weekly would benefit from this facility.