



# **SIUE Head Start screening better prepares Greater East St. Louis children**

July 4 2016 9:32 AM



**EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Head Start/Early Head Start** is one of 30 partners working to ensure that Greater East St. Louis children are linked to high quality early learning programs and services that will help them succeed in school and life.

The Greater East St. Louis Early Learning Partnership & Innovation Zone is offering its second annual enrollment and developmental screening event for children and families in East St. Louis, Washington Park, Centreville and Alorton, said G. Lynnie Bailey, SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start program director.

“Ready, Set, Enroll is a communitywide effort to connect parents, grandparents, foster parents and children to high quality early learning programs and services,” said **Janice Moenster, coordinator of the Greater East St. Louis Innovation Zone**. “These services are designed to support expectant parents, infants, toddlers and preschoolers “The Greater East St. Louis Innovation Zone is the entity that brings all community partners together to support the effort.”

Parents from the community and partners from a variety of sectors, such as education, health, mental health, government and faith communities are engaged in Ready, Set, Enroll. Early learning partners include Child Care Centers, Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, Parenting for Success, More at Four YMCA, Vivian Adams and SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start.

Remaining Ready, Set, Enroll screenings, which include vision, hearing, dental and developmental, are scheduled as follows:

- Today-Friday, July 8: 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Vivian Adams, 501 Katherine Dunham Place, East St. Louis
- Monday, June 27: 10 a.m.-noon, Lessie Bates, 1045 State Street, East St. Louis
- Tuesday, June 28: 10 a.m.-noon, Trinity Outreach Center, 5110 Forest Blvd., Washington Park
- Wednesday, June 29-Thursday, June 30: 10 a.m.-noon, DeShields-Robinson Homes Community Center, 1235 McCasland Ave., East St. Louis
- Friday, July 1: 10 a.m.-noon, Lessie Bates, 1045 State Street, East St. Louis
- Wednesday, July 6: 4-6 p.m., East St. Louis Public Library, 5300 State St., East St. Louis

“The screenings provide parents with a benchmark for their child’s physical, cognitive, and social/emotional development,” said Bailey. “The parents are also offered a list of preschools and child care centers in the Greater East St. Louis community and encouraged to list in order of preference the preschool or daycare that best meets their family’s needs. If a family chooses our program, there are SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start Family Engagement Specialists who are available to assist families in completing an application for our program. Walk-ins are welcome or families can call for an appointment.”

During the process, parents are informed of the nearly 20 early learning options in the area. “What happened in the past is that each program had its own enrollment, and families were not aware of all of their early learning options,” added Moenster. “The child data tells us that there are more than enough children under the age of five to fill

the high quality slots available in Greater East St. Louis. It's not about the individual programs, rather children and families getting the services and support they need to succeed and thrive."

Last year, the screenings drew more than 310 families. Moenster said the partners are hoping to meet or exceed that number this year.

"It's good that those who care about children and early childhood professionals collaborate," said Melanie Stith, SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start family engagement specialist.

"We are creating a smoother transition for children to enroll in kindergarten," said Donna McNeal, Head Start family engagement coordinator. "We are also working hand in hand with others to build a better child and a better community."

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 14,000.