

School for handicapped reopens

Government grant bolsters local mainstreaming efforts

By TODD ADAMS
Of the Emerald

Although an anticipated expansion of services may not be forthcoming, a model preschool program for handicapped children will again offer its services to Eugene-area parents next school year.

Bolstered by a \$105,000 grant from the U.S. Office of Education, the preschool program will again provide classroom and outreach training to help handicapped children prepare for introduction into public schools.

"The program is designed to provide early introductory services for multihandicapped children," says program director Bill Fink. "The children range in age from one to five years."

A summer session of the preschool program ends Thursday, marking the completion of the program's first year under expanded funding, the bulk of the money coming from the Oregon State Mental Health Division and from federal grants.

All the children who have been ready for integration into public schools have successfully made the adjustment from the preschool program in the past two years.

"There is no charge to the parent for our service," says Fink, whose office is housed in the Clinical Services building on 18th Avenue, just west of the School of Music.

"Our referral service is pretty casual," adds Fink. "All a parent has to do is talk to me, and if I can deter-

mine in one conversation whether the child might qualify, then I refer them (parents and child) to the Crippled Children's Division, also housed in Clinical Services."

After an examination with the Crippled Children's Division, the child is admitted to the program if there is a vacancy, otherwise the child is added to a waiting list.

"We had just one or two classrooms before this year," says Fink, adding that there are now five in the program.

But there are several funding contracts still pending for the coming year, and an anticipated expansion of services may not be forthcoming from the Lane Educational Services District.

"This past year we had 48 kids, and we had about 20 or 25 in our outreach program," adds Fink. "We now have five certified teachers and five aids."

There are six teachers including an outreach trainer who, as part of the outreach program, enters the home of the handicapped child and works with the parents to prepare the child for introduction into public schools.

Parents played a crucial role this summer in getting an additional class started through donations. Another class was sponsored by the College of Education, making four classrooms available for the summer sessions.

More specifics about the preschool program are available from Fink by calling his office at 686-3575.



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A more than \$100,000 federal grant will keep the preschool program for handicapped children solvent for another year, at no charge to the parents. The services may not expand, but classroom and outreach training still helps the children gear up for introduction to public schools. This summer marks the first time the school, which is funded in part by the U.S. Office of Education, has enjoyed expanded funding from the Oregon State Mental Health Division and other federal grants.

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