

## PRESS RELEASE

Helen R. Walton Children’s Enrichment Center  
Contact: Sunny Lane  
479-273-3552 (P)  
[www.ecicnwa.org](http://www.ecicnwa.org)

1701 NE Wildcat Way  
Bentonville, AR 72712  
479-271-6803 (F)  
[www.hwcec.org](http://www.hwcec.org)

---

### **Early Childhood Initiatives Center Launches Economic Curriculum for Young Learners**

*Center Partners with Economics Arkansas and the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and University of Delaware Center for Economic Education & Entrepreneurship*

The Early Childhood Initiatives Center (ECIC) has partnered with Economics Arkansas and the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and University of Delaware Center for Economic Education & Entrepreneurship to bring Kiddynamics to early childhood programs in Northwest Arkansas. Kiddynamics, a curriculum developed by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, is designed to introduce young children to the economic way of thinking. Beginning economic education early and building on that learning throughout students’ education is the best way to ensure they develop vital decision making skills.

In this curriculum, students are introduced to basic personal finance and economic concepts, such as scarcity, choice, goods, services, saving, spending, and banks. They explore these concepts through popular children’s literature to reinforce reading fluency. In addition to reading integration, all lessons incorporate activities to enhance school-readiness skills, such as categorizing objects, counting, and letter recognition. Practicing these skills in a variety of contexts helps students prepare for their transition to kindergarten and beyond.

“The St. Louis Fed developed Kiddynamics to provide the building blocks to help put students on the path to healthy economic lives in the future,” said Mary Suiter, economic education officer at the St. Louis Fed. “We know that students develop their financial habits as young as age 7, so starting early and providing reinforcement at school and at home is important.”

All lessons feature active-learning strategies that encourage students to ask and answer questions, participate in group discussions, and build vocabulary. Songs, dramatic play, and art—all things young learners enjoy—are incorporated throughout to maintain student engagement. Finally, several extension activities are suggested at the end of each lesson to further student learning.

“We know young children form their ideas about making choices on how to use their money at an early age,” said Dr. Bonnie Meszaros, Associate Director, Center for Economic Education & Entrepreneurship

at University of Delaware. Kiddynamics for many young children can be the first step in helping them become wise consumers and informed decision makers.”

On October 25 and 26 2016, the ECIC will conduct its first train-the-trainer Kiddynamics training series with early childhood Directors across Northwest Arkansas in training space donated by Northwest Arkansas Community College. Participants will be provided with trainer materials and supplemental children’s books that they will be able to take back to their centers and implement the curriculum in perpetuity.

The ECIC will follow centers closely throughout the implementation process and financial volunteers will host family nights with participating centers that include financial breakout sessions for parents on topics ranging from savings, to investments, to preparing for retirement. Each family will also receive a book, sponsored by Bank of America, with open ended questions to engage their children at home.

“This program is not just about laying a strong foundation for children in decision making as it relates to financial decisions. We take it a step further by providing pertinent financial information and tools to their families as well,” said Michelle Barnes, Executive Director of the Early Childhood Initiatives Center.

Upon completion of the project, the ECIC will develop a Kiddynamics sustainability toolkit for all early childhood programs across the nation, complete with curriculum, tools, marketing materials, as well as information on how to find volunteers and funding. In tandem with the toolkit, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis will continue to provide the curriculum free of charge, and Economics Arkansas will offer trainers for free across the state of Arkansas. These free tools will greatly decrease the cost for individual centers to run Kiddynamics and in doing so, will hopefully increase the reach and success of the program across the nation.

“Economics Arkansas and the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education are excited about the potential impact this program will have on young learners and their families, and we are honored to be part of such a cutting-edge initiative,” said Marsha Masters, Associate Director at Economics Arkansas.

*For more information, contact Sunny Lane or Kristen Herbert at (479) 273-3552 or visit [ecicnwa.org](http://ecicnwa.org).*

###

### **About the Early Childhood Initiatives Center**

The ECIC collaborates with the nearly 500 early childhood programs in Northwest Arkansas, to ensure that every child, infant through pre-k, has access to the highest quality of early childhood education and care. High-quality early childhood education benefits the child, workforce and society through increased graduation rates, parental earnings and employee retention, and ensures a talent rich pipeline, leading to a \$9.21 return on investment for every dollar spent in early education. We rely on the generosity of volunteers, advocates and donors in our community. Visit [ecicnwa.org](http://ecicnwa.org) to learn more.