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NEWS RELEASE
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INNOVATIVE NATIONAL FITNESS AND NUTRITION PROGRAM LAUNCHED BY LOCAL 0-5 HEAD START PROGRAMS

CENTRAL MICHIGAN- EightCAP, 0-5 Head Start has announced that it will be introducing a promising new program, focused on preventing and reversing childhood obesity and promoting lifelong fitness, to their Head Start children in Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, and Montcalm counties.

“The program, called *I am Moving, I am Learning (IMIL)*,” explains Nancy Secor, EightCAP 0-5 Head Start Manager, “Focuses on increased physical activity and healthy nutrition choices and was developed to engage both the child and their family in the moving and learning process.”

Secor goes on to explain that young children are not physically fit just because they are young. Head Start programs can and should make a major contribution to promoting good health and strong bodies for children by *intentionally* integrating appropriate physical activity and wise nutrition choices into their daily routines. The goal of this research-based program is to offer a *deliberate* and “active start” in Head Start that will improve children’s physical, mental, and social development – all of which are critical to school readiness. The program will engage the children, teachers, and parents into the lifelong, healthy living process within the centers and beyond, in the home.

“Although 0-5 Head Start has always included physical activity and nutrition in our program, explains Danielle Moy, 0-5 Early Head Start Education Coordinator, “this program will be integrated into our centers’ daily planning and activities and is more than just a program about childhood obesity, it’s about helping children and families make healthy choices.”

Moy and two other EightCAP 0-5 employees, Janet Baldwin, Head Start Education Coordinator, and Shelly Keene, Early Childhood Specialist-Disabilities, attended IMIL Training the first week of March in Green Bay, Wisconsin. It is their responsibility to train teachers and integrate the program into all 23 EightCAP 0-5 Head Start Centers and introduce it to parents in Fall, 2009.

“I am excited about IMIL,” shares Coordinator Shelly Keene. “IMIL is a great approach that gets children and families moving while learning about making healthy choices that will last a lifetime.”

For more information about EightCAP, 0-5 Head Start programs in the four counties, IMIL, and/or to meet with those involved in the development of this program, please contact those listed above or go to the EightCAP website – www.eightcap.org.

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