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Cradle School encourages early childhood learning

KATHERINE KNOTT The News-Enterprise Sep 9, 2018



Braden Garth, 4, draws with chalk Friday morning at American Legion Park in Elizabethtown during the kickoff event for Hardin County Schools Cradle School. The program offers developmentally appropriate enrichment activities for children 5 years old and younger and their families.

KATHERINE KNOTT/The News-Enterprise

Children played on the Funtopia playground, chased bubbles and drew with chalk on the ground Friday during the annual kickoff for Cradle School, a Hardin County Schools program.

Cradle School is for children 5 and younger and their families. The program is based out of different schools through the county and aimed at teaching early learning skills.

“The whole goal to help parents and caregivers realize they are their child’s first and best teacher,” said Suzanne Parrett, family resource coordinator at G.C. Burkhead Elementary.

Resource centers help coordinate the program. United Way of Central Kentucky also supports Cradle School.

For more information, Parrett said families should call their child's family resource center.

Friday's kickoff event was for the central pod Cradle School for families at G.C. Burkhead, Heartland, Lincoln Trail and New Highland elementary schools. The central pod is at College View Campus, site of the former G.C. Burkhead.

Classes for the central pod start Thursday. The program runs Thursdays from 9 to 10:30 a.m. and Fridays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. all school year. September classes include lessons about crops and animals on the farm.

Cradle School programs at North Park Elementary and in the south pod also are underway. Sessions and times vary for each of the programs. The south pod rotates through Rineyville, Lakewood, Cecilia Valley and Creekside elementary schools.

Parrett said families can go to whichever program is convenient.

About 60 to 75 families attended Friday's kickoff, and after the first hour, organizers ran out of registration forms.

"Our numbers have been going up each year," Parrett said.

Cradle School and other programs around the community help families prepare children for school. School and community officials have said a student who is ready for kindergarten is more equipped to succeed in school. Last year, 51.1 percent of incoming kindergartens were deemed "not ready" for school, according to the Kentucky Common Kindergarten Entry Screener.

The five aspects of readiness, as defined by the state, are physical and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language development; and cognitive development.

Parrett said the numbers of grandparents bringing grandchildren also has increased. She attributes that to more grandparents taking care of grandchildren during the day.

Braden Garth, 4, will be going to Cradle School with his grandmother. He went to child care before and said he was too smart for preschool. His favorite part is cooking in a fake kitchen and he was looking forward to being a chef in Cradle School.

His grandmother, Charlotte Hampton, said she learned about the kickoff from Braden's mother.

"(We are going) because we don't want him to forget what he has learned," he said. "We want to get ready for school."

Hampton said she wants Braden to learn how to play with others and social skills.

"He'll do well this year," she said.

If you go

North Park Elementary Cradle School

- Thursdays from 10-11:30 a.m. and Fridays from 12:30-2 p.m.
- POC: Avis Snyder at 270-351-4464.

Central Pod Cradle School

- Thursdays from 9-10:30 a.m. and Fridays from 10-11:30 a.m.
- POC: A Family Resource Coordinator

South Pod Cradle School

- Fridays from 9-10:30 a.m.
- POC: Avis Snyder at 270-351-4464.

Source: Hardin County Schools

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