

## CFC Joins School Readiness Initiatives

Early childhood experiences heavily influence one's ability to learn, succeed in school, and function in later life. Neuroscience has shown that brain growth is at its highest between the ages of 0-3, and that there are critically important periods for some sensory, motor, and language capabilities, as well as mental health and social functioning. School readiness efforts aim to develop these and numeric and literacy skills in pre-school aged children, to ease the transition to elementary education, and to increase capacity of elementary schools to ensure young students' success.

The California Children and Families Commission is offering the San Benito County Children and Families Commission \$125,000 dollars in School Readiness Program matching funds. These funds will be used to coordinate, develop, implement and sustain a system of school-linked services, programs and supports based on research and promising approaches to school readiness.

Utilizing these funds, the San Benito County Children and Families Commission will hire a School Readiness Specialist who will work with families, school districts and local community based organizations to design a unique program that will have a meaningful impact on the lives of children and families.

The first phase of the School Readiness Project is to meet with parents, schools and local agencies to determine the available resources, identify any gaps in service and to develop a strategic plan. The plan will focus on the means to accomplish the following goals:

- All children being ready for school
- All families having the support and resources they need to help their children be successful in school
- All eligible schools being ready to help children and families be successful in school activities

Some key areas of school readiness for children include: positive approaches to learning, cognitive ability, language, social and emotional growth and physical health. Other building blocks for readiness for school and life are ready families, communities, and schools. The School Readiness grants will assist local schools and agencies to "fill in the gaps" between what services are available and what is needed to help every child succeed.