



# Fact Sheet

## early excellence

AN INITIATIVE OF THE PITON FOUNDATION

### Questions & Answers for Families Interested in Early Excellence

#### Is Early Excellence a childcare program?

Only the Early Excellence at Wyatt-Edison is a child care program, which serves children 12 months to 4 years of age. Otherwise activities at Harrington and Mitchell involve parents and children together and offer extended-day early childhood education classes for 3- and 4-year-olds.

#### How much does Early Excellence cost?

The programs at Mitchell and Harrington are free and paid for by a grant from The Piton Foundation. Wyatt-Edison does charge for its services but works with various public funding sources.

#### How do I sign up?

Call your neighborhood elementary school and ask for an enrollment form.

- Harrington – 303-333-4293
- Maria Mitchell – 303-296-8412
- Wyatt-Edison – 303-292-5515

#### What if I don't live near the schools listed?

Currently, Early Excellence is offered at only three schools. All families who live in the attendance areas of Maria Mitchell and Harrington can participate. Wyatt-Edison is part of a charter school and can accept families from all over Denver.

#### How old does my child have to be to participate?

Early Excellence is for all children, birth to age 4, prior to entering kindergarten. Expectant mothers can also join! Proof of citizenship is not required.

### What is Early Excellence?

Early Excellence is an early childhood education program for children under four who will attend schools in lower-income Denver neighborhoods. The goal of Early Excellence is to increase student learning and achievement by helping parents prepare their young children for school.

### Why do we need an Early Excellence program?

The Piton Foundation, who developed Early Excellence, believes that early childhood education is a key part of school reform – schools do their job better when children come to school ready to learn. In fact, research shows that children who enter kindergarten with adequate social, emotional and intellectual skills do better in school and in life than those children who enter unprepared.

### Which schools have Early Excellence programs?

Currently, there are Early Excellence programs at three Denver Public Schools: Harrington Elementary,

Maria Mitchell Elementary and Wyatt-Edison Charter School, in the Cole area. Mitchell and Harrington have a grant from The Piton Foundation to operate the programs at no cost to participants.

### What do Early Excellence programs offer?

Early Excellence schools offer a variety of activities for children and families based on neighborhood data and early childhood development research. They work collaboratively with parents, community leaders and childcare providers to plan and implement programs. Each school has an Early Excellence Director who manages the program.

Early Excellence offers free programs every week such as:

- Early learning groups
- Field trips
- Parent training workshops
- Enriched early childhood education
- Home visits
- Toy and book lending
- Kindergarten classroom visits

## How are parents involved in Early Excellence?

Early Excellence is based on the fact that learning begins at birth. Parents are a child's first and most important



### TALK

- Tell stories
- Sing songs
- Explain what you are doing while cleaning, cooking and shopping
- Count fingers and toes
- Ask questions



### READ

- Sing the alphabet song
- Identify letters on street signs
- Read labels in stores
- Make a shopping list
- Have books at home
- Read a bedtime story



### PLAY

- Explore new places
- Build things with blocks
- Pretend you are a teacher, doctor or waiter
- Dig in the dirt
- Color and draw
- Hide and seek



### LOVE

- Spend quiet time together
- Give lots of praise and lots of hugs
- Get regular doctor check-ups and shots
- Encourage them to try new things

teacher. The program aims to help parents give their children the tools needed to enter school ready and eager to learn. For example, Early Excellence encourages parents to do four simple things to help their children get ready for school: **Talk, Read, Play, Love.**

## How will we know if Early Excellence Programs are successful?

Early Excellence is being evaluated by Making Connections-Denver (Annie E. Casey Foundation).

Expected outcomes include:

- Increased the school readiness of preschoolers and kindergarteners.
- Increased parent involvement in the education of their children.
- Increased elementary student success in school.
- Early identification and intervention of children with potential developmental delays to decrease students' need for additional help and special education.



## How do I get more information about Early Excellence?

Write or call Zulema Inai at Making Connections-Denver at 2980 Curtis Street, Denver, CO 80205, 720-891-4911. [zinai@mcdenver.org](mailto:zinai@mcdenver.org)

THE PITON FOUNDATION



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