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\$35,000 in gifts to aid pre-K kids

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The Wichita Eagle

Visioneering Wichita's early-childhood alliance has received \$35,000 in grant money for planning efforts to make sure children enter school ready to learn.

The birth-to-kindergarten group will get a \$10,000 one-year grant from the Kansas Children Cabinet and Trust Fund and a \$25,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation.

The grants will cover Sedgwick, Butler, Sumner and Harvey counties, and will be administered by Connecting Point, an early childhood coordinating agency in Wichita.

Visioneering Wichita has made early-childhood education one of its five primary goals. The birth-to-kindergarten alliance meets monthly in hopes of unifying and strengthening the lobbying efforts of dozens of area agencies that serve young children.

Teresa Rupp, executive director of Child Start and co-chair of the birth-to-kindergarten alliance, said the grants will help early-childhood advocates from different areas coordinate their efforts and learn from one another.

"If we want to do something that builds an intelligent system rather than a series of little piecemeal efforts, we need to work on what's going on in each of those counties," Rupp said.

"This money is going to help build consensus," she said. "... I would like to see us take the good things that we have and try to make them more available and easier to use across the area."

The Self Help Network at Wichita State University will continue to facilitate the planning process for the birth-to-kindergarten group, Rupp said. For more information, visit www.visioneeringwichita.com, or call Diane Longfellow at 316-268-1141.

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