

For Immediate Release: May 24, 2023
Contact: Amber Peters, Executive Director
847-452-2457
amberpeters@elginpartnership.org



Elgin Partnership for Early Learning receives nonprofit status *Summer Learning on the Go programs begin June 5*

Elgin, IL – Elgin Partnership for Early Learning, Elgin’s longtime leader in improving children’s readiness for kindergarten, recently received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. The nonprofit status announcement comes as the organization prepares to celebrate its 10th anniversary and launches its annual summer Learning on the Go programs in six Elgin and three Hanover Park neighborhoods.

Elgin Partnership for Early Learning started as a group of like-minded community members gathering to share ideas on how to ensure children in our area are mentally and socially ready for the classroom when they enter kindergarten. In September 2013, EPEL was officially formed, with a focus of connecting community partners’ expertise and resources to help young children thrive. Today, EPEL boasts more than 150 partners working to provide children and their families with the resources they need – from healthcare and nutrition to literacy and social engagement – to help children learn, grow, and excel in their first five years.

Those first five years – or 2,000 days, as EPEL executive director Amber Peters is quick to point out – are critical, as studies indicate that 85 to 90 percent of brain growth happens during that time.

“The impact we have on kindergarten readiness is a big influence on our children’s ability to thrive throughout their entire education,” Peters said.

EPEL’s work throughout the years has been reflected in the improved readiness scores for U-46 kindergartners. In 2017, the percentage of U-46 students testing ready for kindergarten was 10 percent. For the 2022 school year, Illinois School Board of Education reports indicate that number jumped to 24 percent.

From June 5 through July 24, EPEL and its partners will bring Learning on the Go programs to neighborhood parks, community centers, schools, and apartment complexes. These free, bilingual events offer learning through play, story time, and crafts, and provide an opportunity for children to check out books from the Gail Borden or Poplar Creek libraries’ bookmobiles. The programs will be held on the following days and times:

- Mondays from 10 – 11 a.m. at Drake Park, 701 Hastings, Elgin
- Mondays from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Cornerstone Park, 1540 Mulberry Lane, Elgin

- Tuesdays from 10 – 11 a.m. at Parkwood School, 2150 Lauren Ave., Hanover Park
- Tuesdays from 1 – 2 p.m. at Mill/Buena Vista Apartments, 1285 Fleetwood Drive, Elgin
- Wednesdays from 10 – 11 a.m. at Rivers Landing Apartments, 3 Times Square, Elgin
- Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Astor Center, 7341 Astor Ave., Hanover Park
- Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Lords Park (East Shelter), 323 Waverly Drive, Elgin
- Thursdays from 10 – 11 a.m. at Century Oaks School, 1235 Braeburn Drive, Elgin
- Thursdays from 10 – 11 a.m. at Ontarioville School, 2100 Elm Street, Hanover Park

For more information about the Learning on the Go programs, visit www.elginpartnership.org.

While EPEL had been working through a collaboration with YWCA Elgin since adopting its charter in 2013, having its own nonprofit status offers the organization additional avenues for funding and the ability to leverage its partners more effectively.

“Having our nonprofit status allows us to better use our cross-sector partners as part of the solution and further emphasize collective action to reduce the school readiness gap,” Peters said. “My motto is ‘Together We Can’ because, united, our goals and actions are stronger and make a larger impact for our most significant assets in the community – our children and families.”

EPEL provides a resource helpline for families with children. If you or a family you know needs help with literacy, health, or nutrition, call 844-KID-INFO.

###

About Elgin Partnership for Early Learning (EPEL)

EPEL's mission is to intensify the impact of local efforts that prepare children for kindergarten by integrating over 150 partners' expertise and resources to build a connected community dedicated to helping young children thrive. EPEL's vision is for all children to be happy, healthy, and ready for kindergarten. EPEL works to bring awareness to the importance of early learning and meets families where they are to provide access to resources to early learning opportunities in the community through traditional and non-traditional means like Language in the Laundromats, Learning on the Go family engagement, medical centers, and food pantries.