

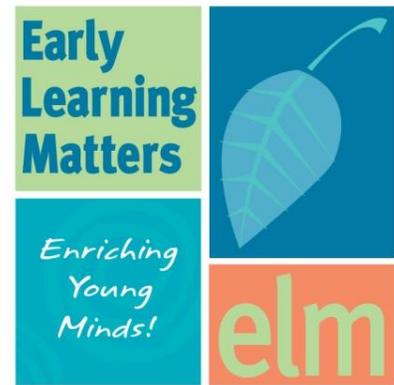
**For Immediate Release:**

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**Local Preschool Becomes Oregon's 1<sup>st</sup> Early Childhood Center to Offer Breakthrough Program to Develop Leadership Skills**

**Hillsboro, OR-August 30, 2010-** Early Learning Matters announces implementation of a leadership program for preschool and Kindergarten students. *The Leader in Me* process helps develop essential life skills and characteristics students need in order to thrive in the 21st century.

"It's never too young to begin to foster personal accountability and communication skills," said Kandy Dicken, Director of Early Learning Matters, brain-based preschool and Kindergarten. "Research indicates that success is more accurately predicted by a child's emotional intelligence rather than early academic achievement. Many schools are cutting the very experiences that matter most to early childhood development due to the budget crisis and test preparation. ELM is proud to continue to offer programs such as *The Leader in Me* that honor the development of the *whole child* and provide a lasting positive impact academically and socially," she continues.

This program is built upon the principle-based leadership skills from Dr. Stephen R. Covey's best-selling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Studies overwhelmingly show that integrating the program into the culture of the school produces continuous gains year after year. Students and schools benefit in the following ways:

- Develops skills and self-confidence needed to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century leader
- Decreases discipline referrals
- Builds character and leadership while maintaining core curriculum
- Improves academic achievement
- Raises level of engagement and teamwork between parents and staff

About Early Learning Matters: Early Learning Matters (ELM) provides opportunities in an enriched environment for children to develop strong thinking skills. ELM's child-programs include a brain-based Preschool, Pre-K, and Kindergarten program, cognitive assessment, consultation, individual programming, summer classes, and community, parent, and teacher education. ELM serves many families from a broad spectrum in the greater Portland Metro area. The owner and director, Kandy Dicken MAT, has been a provider of educational services in both public and private settings since 1997.

For more information on Early Learning Matters: [www.strongthinkers.com](http://www.strongthinkers.com)

For more information on The Leader in Me: [www.theleaderinme.org](http://www.theleaderinme.org)

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