

Family and Consumer Sciences

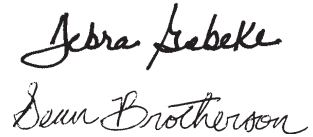
NDSU Dept. 7090
311 Morrill Hall, P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

June 15, 2011

TO: North Dakota elementary principals and school superintendents

FROM: Dr. Debra Gebeke, Extension Assistant Director
Dr. Sean Brotherson, Extension Family Science Specialist

RE: Gearing Up for Kindergarten Program



A new opportunity to address school readiness in your district is now available to North Dakota schools! Your school is invited to consider participating in this research-based program, developed and tested with site data from North Dakota schools. The 2011 legislative session's Education Bill #2150 included funding to expand the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program in North Dakota. The *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program was developed by NDSU Extension Service specialists and Parent Resource Center coordinators to assist parents and their 4 year-olds in preparing for the transition to kindergarten. *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* is a school readiness and parent education program. Parent participation is critical to the success of this program.

After four years of research, evidence indicates that the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program is making a difference. Parents are eager to attend and students perform better on readiness scales than those who do not attend. A variety of school districts have partnered with the NDSU Extension Service to conduct research. We have also had interest from schools that implemented the program without any research funding. Data and anecdotal information from these sites have been valuable in the development of the program. You can see a brief video and read more about the research efforts to date at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/gearupkindergarten

If you wish to discuss this program with one of the participating schools, you may contact school administrators and/or kindergarten teachers for more information.

- Participating schools/research sites (10 or 16 sessions per class) during the past two years include Kindred/Davenport, West Fargo, Grand Forks, Fargo, Dickinson, and Mandan.
- Schools that have funded the program (10 or 16 sessions per class) without research grants include Rugby, Carrington, Oakes, Richland/Colfax, Williston/Trenton, and Mayville/Portland.

The Commission on Education Improvement recommended taking *the Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program statewide. The 2011 legislature provided \$500,000 for the biennium to support schools with reimbursable grants that support implementing the program in a school district. The NDSU Extension Service will manage the expansion effort for the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program and offer two statewide trainings for interested schools and REA's.

The first training will be held in Mandan on August 16th at the Seven Seas, and the second training will be offered in Fargo on August 19th at the Skills and Technology Center in North Fargo. More details will follow in another email. Each participating school will be required to send at least one staff person (coordinator, teacher and/or administrator) to the training to be eligible for reimbursement.

Reimbursement will be based on the following formula:

\$133 per student/family, up to \$2,000 for a 16 session class

\$125 per student/family, up to \$1,250 for a 10 session class

(each class must serve a minimum of 10 families per class and the recommended maximum size of 15 families per class)

The legislated funds also allowed for one person to be hired half-time as the point person for all Gearing Up expansion in North Dakota. Judith Konerza, coordinator for the Region 4 Parent Information Center and Grand Forks school employee, will provide leadership for this effort beginning August 22, 2011. Until that time, your questions may be directed to:

- Gearing Up research specialist, Dr. Sean Brotherson, NDSU Extension Service, at (701) 231-6143, sean.brotherson@ndsu.edu; or his administrative assistant, Susan Finneseth, at 231-7254, susan.finneseth@ndsu.edu; or
- NDSU Extension Service Assistant Director, Dr. Deb Gebeke at 231-7179, debra.gebeke@ndsu.edu; or her administrative assistant, Kris Holt, at 231-9688, kris.holt@ndsu.edu

If your school is interested in providing the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program during the 2011-2012 school year, please complete the *Application Form* included with this letter and mail/email (postmarked/emailed) by August 1, 2011 to the address below:

NDSU Extension Service

ATTN: Susan Finneseth

Dept 7270 (EML 369)

PO Box 6050

Fargo, ND 58108

susan.finneseth@ndsu.edu

Schools responding by August 1 will have priority in receiving reimbursements based on the order in which received. You will receive confirmation of qualifying for the program within two weeks of your submission. After August 1, we will assess the response rate and send another letter to offer the program to additional schools with any remaining funds. More information will be shared at the NDCEL meeting and other upcoming conferences.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. Our data indicates that schools and families are very impressed with the program and most important, it is assisting our newest learners in making a positive transition. We hope your school will join the effort to address school readiness in North Dakota.



Application Form

NDSU
Extension Service

DUE August 1, 2011

School District _____ Number _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Person _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Projected kindergarten enrollment for 2011-2012 school year _____

Number of classes your district plans to offer in 2011-2012? (one class serves up to 15 families - both child and adult attend together) _____

Format your district will use? (please check one) _____ 10 sessions or _____ 16 sessions

To qualify for reimbursement, your school district must send a representative(s) (kindergarten teacher, school principal, program coordinator, etc.) to one of the two trainings offered in August, and complete the evaluation forms provided. Two options will be available for training: August 16th in Mandan or August 19th in Fargo. Staff will be trained in the program, hear from a panel of school personnel who have implemented the program and learn how schools have covered the costs of the program. More information and registration will be sent soon.

Operating one class for 15 families at 10 or 16 sessions will cost more than \$2,000. The legislature intended to contribute toward costs of the certified kindergarten teacher and the parent educator. Please briefly describe how your school district is prepared to cover additional program costs.

Maximum reimbursement for a school district based on kindergarten enrollment			
Projected School Kindergarten Enrollment Fall 2011	Number of classes eligible for reimbursement	Maximum Dollars Available	
		16 Sessions per class	10 Sessions per class
1-30	1	\$2,000	\$1,250
31-70	2	\$4,000	\$2,500
71-110	3	\$6,000	\$3,750
111-160	4	\$8,000	\$5,000
161-300	5	\$10,000	\$6,250
301-600	6	\$12,000	\$7,500
601-1000	7	\$14,000	\$8,750

*School districts will be selected based on the order received (postmark/email stamp date) until funds are expended. Notification of successfully funded applicants will be made within two weeks of submission to the designated contact person by email.