



...Because every child deserves a childhood

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Astor hosts forum on Kindergarten readiness
150 educators expected at March 4 symposium

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POUGHKEEPSIE – Preparing a child for school takes teamwork. That’s the theme of the *Mid-Hudson Valley Transition Forum*, a daylong conference on early childhood education issues to be hosted by Astor Services for Children & Families on March 4. About 150 teachers, child-care professionals and other educators are expected to attend the event at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

“We’re hoping this event will enable school districts, medical professionals and others in the early childhood education community to explore ways to help children get ready for Kindergarten,” said Mary Sontheimer, Assistant Executive Director, Astor’s Early Childhood Programs. “It’s important to develop an effective collaboration among everyone involved with these kids, to ensure a smooth transition so everyone knows how children are being prepared for this step.”

For over 30 years, Astor has administered the federally-funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Dutchess County. These programs are for low-income families.

Educators from Dutchess, Ulster, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties have been invited to attend the event, which is co-sponsored by the Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.

Participants will include school district administrators and teachers, Head Start and Early Head Start representatives and others involved in pre-Kindergarten education as well as specialists in dual-language learning and those who help young children with disabilities. Representatives of the state Department of Education also will attend.

Topics to be covered at the conference will include answering questions most often posed by children, such as “Will I have friends?” and “Will I be able to follow all the rules?” Strategies for convincing parents to become involved in their children’s education from the outset will also be discussed.

For more information about the conference, contact Sontheimer at 845-871-4167.

About Astor

Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families (formerly The Astor Home for Children) has been providing behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. Now serving more than 6,000 children and families annually in over 33 locations, Astor’s current range of services in the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties) and the Bronx include: Residential Programs (for children ages 5-14 who have severe behavior and mental health challenges); Early childhood Programs (Astor operates the Early Head Start and Head Start Programs in Dutchess County, a federal early childhood program for low-income families); and Community-Based Behavioral Health and Prevention Services (outpatient mental health services).

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