

Getting ahead



Regina Wentz, pre-K Blue classroom teacher, works with a group of students at Sunbeam Early Learning Center. Group learning is an important part of early childhood development.

PHOTO BY TAMMY SHRIVER

Early childhood education can boost ability to learn

■ For video footage and a slideshow of photos about early childhood education, log on to www.timeswv.com.

BY MARY WADE BURNSIDE
TIMES WEST VIRGINIAN

FAIRMONT — When Eric and Erin Hauser had their daughter, Hailey, now 4, the couple needed to put her in day care, but they specifically sought one with a learning component.

At the time, the Hausers lived in upstate New York, and after the family moved to Fairmont two years ago, they transferred their 2-year-old daughter to Sunbeam Early Learning Center, with newborn Kyle soon joining her, so their children could continue on the path of gaining knowledge at a young age.

They have been pleased with their children's progress. Kyle, now 2, can say his ABCs, and Hailey also has made strides.



"She's 4, and she can write her ABCs," Eric Hauser said. "She can count, write out certain words. She's doing real well."

Eventually, the couple plan to send their third child, due later this month, to Sunbeam as well, all in an effort to prepare their kids for public school.

"I've heard — I don't know if it's accurate — that the first five years of a kid's life, they kind of set up how they learn. Not just what they learn, but how they learn," Hauser said. "We've heard that helps. Our thought is, why take the chance? If it's not the case, she will not be behind, and there is a good chance she's going to be ahead."

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West Virginia still has 'more work to do' with pre-K

BY MARY WADE BURNSIDE
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FAIRMONT — When it comes to early childhood learning, West Virginia ranks in many top 10 lists that measure accessibility to pre-

made earlier in the year during his State of the State address.

"We have done an admirable job in pre-K," said Julie Pratt, project director of the West Virginia Early Childhood Planning Task Force. "But we still have more work to do."

