

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 18, 2008

CONTACT:

Connie Valk, Early Care and Education Specialist  
Children's Institute  
(585) 295-1000, x248  
[cvalk@childrensinstitute.net](mailto:cvalk@childrensinstitute.net)

Lori VanAuken, Director, Community Partnerships & Resource Development  
Children's Institute  
(585) 295-1000, x227  
[lvauken@childrensinstitute.net](mailto:lvauken@childrensinstitute.net)

**NEW ACCREDITATION SYSTEM PILOTED  
IN ROCHESTER**



Rochester, NY, February 18, 2008 – Children's Institute with help from early education partners has launched ***Pathways: National Early Education and Care Accreditation***, a locally created national accreditation system for childcare centers. Two childcare centers, Park Ridge Child Care Center and Kids First Childcare, will participate in the pilot project. Together the centers serve 174 children between the ages of 6 months and 4 years who will benefit from the project.

*Pathways* was commissioned by the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), a 17-year community-wide partnership of institutions, early childhood experts and funders charged with raising the quality of early childhood services in Rochester and Monroe County. "All childcare centers must meet the standards of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services in order to operate. Higher national accreditation standards helps centers focus on quality services and ensure children are getting the highest possible early care and education experiences available," said Jacque Cady, Chairperson of ECDI. "After three years of development, *Pathways* is going live. It is a rigorous, user-friendly system that blends the best thinking of many experts in the field."

Park Ridge Child Care Center and Kids First Childcare will be assessed in four comprehensive areas of their programs: education and care, wellness, safety and administration. The childcare centers will need to meet or exceed 484 criteria to meet national accreditation standards. Center directors will start with an on-line survey to help them assess their readiness to begin the process. *Pathways* utilizes several normed assessment tools, parent surveys, interviews with staff and administrators and site visits by highly trained assessors from Children's Institute. "This process will help to ensure that we are following best practices in early childhood education. Our children and families deserve and expect this from us," said Pam Mroczek of Park Ridge Child Care Center.

The *Pathways* process includes provisions for technical support to the childcare centers. *Pathways* places value on the experience and professional development of caregivers as well as their educational background in the scoring process. It also provides a collaborative process for corrective action in areas that need improvement. Centers that achieve *Pathways* accreditation will receive a 15% differential reimbursement rate from Monroe County for eligible children.

children's  
institute

274 N. Goodman Street, Suite D103 • Rochester, New York 14607  
(585) 295-1000 (phone) • (585) 295-1090 (fax) • (877) 888-7647 (toll-free)  
[www.childrensinstitute.net](http://www.childrensinstitute.net)

The pilot project has been underwritten by Rochester's Child, a fundraising program of The Community Foundation. It is anticipated that both pilot centers will complete the accreditation process in one year and that *Pathways* will be ready for full implementation in 2009.

Children's Institute is a national not-for-profit organization based in Rochester. Its mission is to strengthen children's social and emotional health. Through sound research and evaluation Children's Institute develops and promotes effective prevention programs, materials and best practices for children, families, schools and communities. Staff members include psychologists, an economist, a pediatrician, educators, social workers, business professionals and experts in public policy and evaluation.

###