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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OPENS DENTAL CLINIC AT HEAD START

*Children to receive expanded access to dental care at new clinic*

OCALA—Community collaboration continues as the Florida Department of Health in Marion County has partnered with the Head Start and Early Head Start programs to open a dental clinic to care for children.

Children through age 5 who are enrolled in Head Start are eligible. Children can receive exams, preventive care, fillings, extractions and other dental services at the Head Start Clinic.

"We are excited to open a dental clinic at Head Start," said Dr. Cathy Bridges, dental program manager at the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. "Tooth decay remains the single most common chronic disease in children. With this increased access to dental care, we can reduce the number of days children miss school due to dental problems, putting them on the path to success."

"This partnership with the Florida Department of Health in Marion County provides children in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs with much-needed dental services," said Brandi Cooney, director of administration for Childhood Development Services. "Prior to the clinic at Skylark our children traveled to surrounding counties for dental services. This was a huge burden for low-income families in Marion County and sometimes resulted in some children not receiving services. Head Start programs rely on local community support to provide holistic services to the children and their families enrolled in the program."

The Head Start clinic is open each Monday at the Childhood Development Services Inc. complex at 1601 NE 25th Ave., Suite 801 in Ocala.

Call the Department's Dental Clinic at 352-622-2664 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Head Start is a federally funded program that prepares children and their families for school success.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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