

Program Summary

Children with developmental delays and disabilities, and children from at-risk environments, often struggle when entering the public school system. Developmentally appropriate school readiness activities and tools are critical to ensure that these children are prepared to enter kindergarten. Early intervention programs often mitigate the need for future special education services and therapies in the public school system.

Opportunities' Developmental Day Program provides therapies and services to children with developmental delays and disabilities. Most of these children come from low-income, at-risk environments. These children require specialized learning tools to assist them in reaching developmental proficiency. Currently, Opportunities uses Scholastic curriculum for its preschool children. This specialized developmental curriculum focuses on numbers skills, expressive language and emergent literacy.

With a generous grant from Texas Rural Communities, Inc., Opportunities requests \$1,624.90 to purchase and create listening centers for two preschool classrooms in its Developmental Day Program to supplement and enhance its current curriculum. Emergent literacy is a crucial component of children learning to read and write; it is the foundation of their reading and writing comprehension. The listening centers will provide children with a space specifically designed to improve their listening, vocabulary and communication skills. In addition, these centers will provide a calming environment for children with autism spectrum/sensory processing disorders who may feel overwhelmed by traditional classroom settings.

Over 90% of the children in the Developmental Day Program receive speech/language therapy, and language development is a key component to future success in school and beyond. With the addition of listening centers in the preschool classrooms, these children will have another tool to foster their emergent literacy and help them be prepared to enter the public school system.

I. Contact Information

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II. Organizational Description

Opportunities, Inc. has served the people of Northeast Texas and Southwest Arkansas for 50 years, with a focus on children and adults with developmental disabilities and the elderly. We began in 1966 on the hopes and dreams of one mother who wanted community services for her son who had developmental disabilities. Opportunities opened in the basement of a local community building with five children, and 50 years later has grown into an organization that has made a difference in the lives of over 40,000 individuals. We provide day services for children with developmental delays and disabilities, children from low-income, at-risk environments, adults with developmental disabilities, and frail elderly, and residential services for low-income elderly and adults with developmental disabilities. The organization has operated under strong guidance from the Board of Directors and a continuity of leadership. Patty Smith, Executive Director, has been leading the organization for 45 years. The mission of Opportunities is to provide developmental and support services which assist individuals in attaining a full life in the community. We provide therapies, transportation, nutritious meals, health services, work and living skills training, and residential services all at little to no cost to clients and families.

III. Program Description

Opportunities' Developmental Day Program is a full-day, full-year center-based program for infants, toddlers and preschoolers (ages birth to five) who have developmental delays and disabilities, such as Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, autism spectrum/ sensory processing disorder, and cerebral palsy. In addition to developmental delays and disabilities, most of the children served by Opportunities come from at-risk environments. Over 90% of the children enrolled in Opportunities meet the federal guidelines for poverty and are eligible for free or reduced lunch. These indigent children have the greatest needs and the fewest resources. Children are referred by physicians and are evaluated regularly to determine and track program

needs and progress. Children receive physical, occupational and speech therapies by certified therapists, and follow published curriculum overseen by teachers with special education certification. Last year, 154 children received 7,093 hours of therapies. In addition to therapies, children receive transportation, nutritious meals and health services, all at no cost to families. In addition to center-based therapies, Opportunities provides at-home Early Intervention services to children age birth to three. Opportunities is the sole provider of EI services in a nine county area in Texas and Arkansas.

Opportunities requests a grant in the amount of \$1,624.90 to create and purchase listening centers for two preschool classrooms in its Developmental Day Program. Opportunities recognizes the importance of emergent literacy in children's development and school readiness, and listening centers will enhance the Scholastic curriculum currently implemented in the preschool classrooms. These specially designed areas will foster language development, reading and vocabulary skills, and listening and communication skills. They will also provide an area for children with autism spectrum/sensory processing disorders to utilize if feeling overwhelmed by traditional classroom settings.

The listening centers will include a specialized listening center table with an area to house the media player and headphones, a media player (CD/MP3/USB/Cassette/AM/FM), an output port for up to six listeners, six headphones and six chairs. Media will be available for download online or will be purchased with program funds. The Developmental Day Program already has one listening center table; grant funds will be used to purchase a second table, two multimedia centers, and 12 chairs.

Expected outcomes of this project include increased language development, increased listening comprehension, increased sensory processing skills, and an overall increase in classroom management through the use of the listening centers. Opportunities also expects these outcomes to continue at home, as teachers and paraprofessionals will work with parents to continue fostering emergent literacy concepts and skills to prepare children to enter the public school system. Success will be measured in quarterly evaluations as part of each child's individual program plan.

If awarded this grant, Opportunities will purchase the equipment for the listening centers within one month of funding, and will implement the project within three months. If we do not receive the full amount requested, Opportunities will seek additional funding sources to complete the project.

IV. Program Budget

<i>Item</i>	<i>Qty</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Total</i>
Multimedia Listening Center	2	\$328.99	\$657.98
Stacking Chairs (Set of 6)	2	\$187.99	\$375.98
Listening Center Table	1	\$378.99	\$378.99
Estimated Shipping			\$211.95
TOTAL			\$1,624.90