

# THE MANY FACES OF TVMHC

## *Early Success Program Assists Pre-School Children*

Corey was four years old when his foster mother brought him to the Early Success Program. Corey needed individual counseling to help him deal with a history of growing up in a home where there was domestic violence. His parents were chemically dependent and unable to provide him and his younger sister with adequate care and supervision.

The Early Success Program (ESP) of TVMHC's Child and Family Services Program was developed two years ago in cooperation with Washington County Head Start. The program is designed to serve seriously emotionally disturbed pre-school children within an integrated Head Start classroom. ESP offers a mental health alternative to placing the children in other more stigmatized programs which may contain all emotionally disturbed children.

When Corey was placed in the foster home, he had difficulty adjusting to a situation in which there were rules about not hitting and where the parents supervised the children consistently. Corey was also in need of a pre-school experience to help him deal with his problem of not getting along with other children and to allow respite for his foster mother.

ESP and Head Start seemed like an ideal response to Corey's situation. Placing him in a mainstream Head Start program would provide positive role models from other children, as well as a chance to catch up on his learning skills. Corey would also benefit from the two mental health therapists who worked alongside the Head Start teacher in providing support and the social skills training he needed in order to start making friends and to survive in a regular classroom.

Initially after entering ESP, Corey tantrumed and was physically aggressive both at home and in school. With the support of the ESP staff and his foster parents, however, Corey began to develop control of his behavior and learned how to talk about his feelings rather than act them out.



*Typical Head Start classroom for Early Success Program children.*

Along with these changes came new school friends and Corey made so much progress over the course of a year that he was able to transition into a regular kindergarten class this fall. Finally, when Corey became available for adoption, his foster parents realized how much a part of the family he had become and decided to seek adoption. Corey's adoption is in process at this time.

*(NOTE: The story of Corey is made up of a composite of children treated in the ESP program. Individual stories cannot be shared in order to protect the confidentiality of the children.)*

- *The Early Success Program is located in two different Head Start sites, North Beaverton and West Hillsboro, and serves up to twelve pre-school children and their families.*
- *The usual program stay is between six months and two years depending upon the need and age of the child.*
- *Individual and family therapy is offered year-round with the pre-school day treatment program available four days per week during the Head Start school year which is September through May.*

**For more information on the Early Success Program, please contact Jeanne Ewen at 645-3581.**