



For Immediate Release – March 20, 2008

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4 out of 4 Star Rating for Kiddin' Around Learning Center

Hilltop's Kiddin' Around Learning Center is pleased to announce it's 4 out of 4 star rating from Qualistar Early Learning for the 2008/2009 year, as well as, the \$18,500 grant received from Qualistar Early Learning. Kiddin' Around Learning Center is the only 4 star child care center in Mesa County and is currently accepting enrolling. Please contact the program Director, Diana Hardin at 248-0873 for more information.

According to Cathy Story, Coordinator, Hilltop's Child and Family Center, "We are very proud of the 4-star rating. It is a very difficult and demanding process, and the rating is a reward for our constant attention to providing a high quality child care environment."

Qualistar Early Learning (www.qualistar.org) is an independent agency that evaluates Mesa County home childcare providers, pre-schools and centers on a one (lowest) to four (highest) star rating on the following quality factors: Learning Environment, Family Partnerships, Training and Education of Staff, Adult/Child Ratios, and Accreditation components.

Kiddin' Around Learning Center is an innovative program that serves all children, including children with special needs, from ages 2 to 21 years with educational and recreational activities designed to address the wide range of physical, mental and emotional abilities. Children develop strengths, maximize potential and have the opportunity to fully participate in society. During 2007, this program served 209 families with 251 children including 77 special-needs.

Program services:

- **Integrated Early Childhood Programs:** Classrooms are integrated to provide all children with an opportunity to socialize with their peers. Benefits include reduced social isolation.
- **Before & After School Enrichment Program:** A supplement to the daily school schedule.
- **Summer Program:** Activities highlight life skills, conflict resolution, and independence. Goals include personal hygiene, time management, budgeting, and creating community connections.
- **EC CARES Curriculum:** Nationally recognized curriculum designed to promote social competence and prevent, reduce, and treat aggression and related conduct problems in young children, as well as early literacy. The 6-week parent component promotes positive behavior at home and school and provides parents with tools to reinforce constructive behaviors.

As a partnership between Hilltop, Department of Human Services, and Mesa Developmental Services, Kiddin' Around Learning Center also collaborates with Mesa County Valley School District #51 and Ariel Center.

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