



July 18, 2022 – For Immediate Release

Contact: Kaitlin Ferguson, kferguson@ssc.edu, (708) 596-2000 ext. 2463

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South Suburban College Awarded Grant to Support Early Childhood Education

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL– South Suburban College (SSC) was awarded a \$847,867.68 grant by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). SSC is working with colleges across the State of Illinois under the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act to provide support for new students in the field of early childhood education while assisting incumbent workers to enroll in and complete degree or certificate programs.

SSC offers an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Early Childhood Education in addition to Level II and Level III certificate options. The program is geared toward those interested in a career working with children from birth to 8 years old. “We are very excited to receive this grant at SSC,” said Anna Helwig, Ph.D., Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “We have hired an early childhood education coach who will be the conduit between the institution and navigators who work directly with regional early childhood centers.” This coach will begin employment at South Suburban College on August 1, 2022.

In addition to hiring support staff, the grant will also be utilized to update classroom technology and provide students studying early childhood education with laptops to borrow to enhance their learning experience. These SSC students will also have access to apply for special emergency funds, a debt relief program and stipend to be administered once they achieve their academic goal of attaining a degree or certificate with a concentration in early childhood education.

A key goal of the 3-year grant will be to streamline, coordinate, and improve the accessibility of degree completion pathways to benefit those working in and served by the industry in addition to employers of early childhood educators. A virtual open house highlighting the early childhood education concentration at SSC will take place on Wednesday, July 20, 2022 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Details about program requirements, pathway agreements with four-year institutions, scholarship information and more will be addressed. Those looking to begin a career in early childhood education or advance their current profession are required to register for the open house at: <https://bit.ly/3OmJYwx>.

For additional information about the grant, please contact Anna Helwig, Ph.D., at (708) 596-2000, ext. 5706, or email ahelwig@ssc.edu. The South Suburban College Main Campus is located at 15800 South State Street South Holland, Illinois. *Our mission is to Serve our Students and the Community through lifelong learning.*

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