NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Pre-Kindergarten Summit is August 4 in Bismarck

BISMARCK, ND – School administrators, early childhood educators including Head Start program staff, policymakers, school board members, parents, and others are gathering August 4 for a Pre-Kindergarten Summit in Bismarck at the Heritage Center on the Capitol grounds.

"Our goal is to bring people together to talk about how communities can establish quality pre-kindergarten programs for North Dakota children," said summit sponsor Linda Rorman. Rorman is the Head Start State Collaboration Office Administrator for the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

The summit's featured speaker, Dr. Graciela Italiano-Thomas, served as a senior consultant to the National Head Start Bureau. Her keynote address, "Collaborating Towards Excellence: Pre-Kindergarten in North Dakota," is at 9 a.m.

Her presentation will be followed by a panel discuss on supporting quality preschool services in rural North Dakota. The summit also features breakout sessions from 12:30 to 2:45 p.m. on administrative issues, assessments, developmentally appropriate practice and classroom practices, and potential partners.

Registration is free. About 68 individuals have preregistered. People can register by e-mailing *lein_roberta@bah.com*. On-site registration is also possible.

Rorman said pre-kindergarten programs promote early literacy, set the foundation for understanding math concepts, and can benefit a child's social and emotional development.

In North Dakota, school districts can use federal Title I funds to develop pre-kindergarten programs, if they choose. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction sets the standards for pre-kindergarten programs, and to date has approved about six Title I preschool programs.

For information about the summit, contact Linda Rorman, at 701-328-1711.

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