Smart Start ELF on Main St.

The Columbus County Partnership for Children will soon unveil its new Smart Start Early Learning Center (ELF). Located at 107 W. Main St. in Whiteville, the ELF, formerly the Smart Start Resource Lending Library, will open for limited hours during the first week of November for invited groups from pre-Kindergarten education programs and early education advocates. Everyone is invited to the grand opening celebration on Saturday, November 5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call 910-642-8226.

The ELF is undergoing a transformation that will make it a one-of-a-kind resource in the county. It will be accessible to early educators in pre-K programs and child care facilities as well as families needing educational materials and resources for teaching their young children in the home.

A variety of children's books, videos, prop boxes, resource kits, toys and materials on specific topics related to children will be available through a check-out/check-in loaner program. Access to a laminating machine, comb binder, Ellison Die-Cut machine, art supplies, copier and access to online resources may be available to ELF members at a nominal fee.

ELF staff will offer training on all equipment and demonstrate its appropriate use. Consumer awareness materials on subjects such as early care and education, health, family support and child wellness will be available in English and Spanish.

"The Columbus County Partnership for Children is thrilled to open the Early Learning Facility," said Wilbur Smith, executive director of the Partnership. "We encourage community members concerned about the health, education, and general welfare of our young children become familiar with and take advantage of the services offered," he added.

Beginning November 7, the ELF will operate on the following schedule: Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Columbus County Partnership for Children is part of a statewide effort that works with families with children ages birth to five to ensure that children are healthy and ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

To reach the ELF, call 910-640-3663 during the posted hours of operation. To learn about the other activities of the Columbus County Partnership for Children, call 910-642-8226, visit the office at 109 W. Main St. or the website at www.columbussmartstart.org. Like us on Facebook to keep up with the special events and other information about the Partnership.