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## The Opportunity Project (TOP)

BY DR. CHARLENE LARAMORE [claramore@usd260.com](mailto:claramore@usd260.com) Mar 22, 2017



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According to the Blue Print for Early Childhood Education, a child's brain grows the fastest in early childhood (ages 0-5) and investments in early childhood yield significant results. Supportive relationships and healthy environments are critical in the early years. Focusing on strong families, early learning and healthy development with a supportive community help us achieve our goal of attaining kindergarten readiness.



Derby Public Schools partners with The Opportunity Project (TOP) through our four-year-old At-Risk funding from the State of Kansas to give 50 of our students an early childhood learning experience. TOP is a private early childhood learning center. Their mission is to deliver a high-quality early learning experience to children living in poverty, providing them the tools needed for emotional, academic, and lifelong success. TOP's goal is to support working families and offer full-day learning opportunities to TOP kids. They provide a variety of fun learning activities and programs. TOP's funding partners include Head Start, Early Head Start, USD 260, USD 259, Department of Children and Families, and Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. The following curriculum is offered: pre-math, pre-reading, pre-writing, creative arts, technology, music, science, social studies, physical fitness, health and nutrition.

Meal times are part of the learning experience at TOP. They are served family style in the classrooms and the children eat side-by-side with their teachers and classmates. Students learn the importance of washing their hands before coming to the table, how to set the table, how to pass and serve food. They also learn table manners, what each food item is, to try new foods, how to clean up their dishes and the importance of brushing their teeth following a meal.

Derby Public Schools is now accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. Students must qualify. If you are interested in having your child attend TOP, please contact any Derby Public Schools elementary.

