

**Rochester Area Foundation - News & Publications****Quote of the Moment...**

I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is.

~Wayne Gretzky ~

**Embrace First Steps Program**

Fri, Oct 14, 2005

The First Steps Program initiated by the Rochester Area Foundation, partnered with Rochester Public Schools, Public Health, Social Service, Child Care Resource and Referral and United Way of Olmsted County, is a program that our county can embrace.

 E-MAIL TO A FRIEND

We need it, because only 39 percent of our students in the Rochester kindergarten, when assessed in the first quarter of 2004 in language and literacy, were given the upper of three assessment marks. A full 50 percent fell in between and 11 percent were given the lowest mark.

It is a well-thought-out program focusing on all children so they shall be ready socially, emotionally and physically when they enter kindergarten. The Rochester Area Foundation is undertaking this program, visualizing what our children can become.

Early learning develops positive self-esteem. Children begin learning and modeling from birth. The brain is developed three-quarter percent by the age of 5. They need to be nurtured in an environment that is rich in positive experiences. They learn through play.

Every child can succeed. We need the entire county; every teenager, adult, organization, both public and private, and every institution including our faith communities to take the challenge and help focus on early childhood education. The investment of \$4 million, or \$65 per child, is a small investment when we consider the cost on our society for the social and penal services. Vivien Johnson

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