The Backpack Program was founded in 1992, through collaboration between the administration of Delta County School District and Early Childhood professionals to forge a new concept around bringing the parents of Delta County resources for families with children ages 3-5 years old. The result was a unique home-based preschool program. This program is designed to provide children with stimulating educational literacy experiences that support parents as the first and most important teacher. This distinctive program was designed to provide families in Delta County with developmentally appropriate supplemental materials that would help their child develop the skills necessary to be successful in school. Each item in the Backpack box was specifically chosen to build and broaden strong literacy skills centered on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, letter naming and active engagement. Each box also includes appropriate materials to develop the child’s fine and gross motor skills, their problem solving skills, and their creativity. These Backpack boxes provide play with a purpose and encourage active parental involvement in their child’s early development.

Description & Summary

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The Backpack Program’s core foundation is to support parents as a child’s first and most important teacher.

Founded 1992 - Delta County School District

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The Backpack Program partners with Delta Family Center to host quarterly events designed to support parents as a child’s first and most important teacher. These Parent and Child Together (PACT) Times are an opportunity for families to come to the center and connect with their child in a play-based environment. Delta Family Center staff, which includes over 40 early educators, facilitate coordinated events designed to bring community partners and local experts together to create a stronger community.

P.A.C.T. Times

Partners

The Backpack Program’s success continues on through the Backpack Early Learning Academy (BELA) Preschool, which was created in 2000 out of need for children in Delta County who were not being served with existing preschool options. BELA Preschool currently serves over 300 children in Delta County and provides a necessary link in the education of all Delta County students. Delta Family Center also brings the support of Family Resource Center Association (FRCA), as DFC houses one of 29 FRCA locations within the State of Colorado.

Success & Data

Through a partnership with Delta County Schools, the Backpack Program has been able to track and link student success of Backpack participants through state standardized testing at 3rd grade since 1997. These yearly assessments have consistently shown that a higher percentage of children who were in involved in the Backpack Program at ages 3-5 scores fall in Advanced/Proficient than students who did not participate in the Backpack Program. These longitudinal outcomes support that parent involvement does impact student academic success. In addition to these studies, the Backpack Program has added looking at juniors in high school and ACT/SAT scores in relationship to involvement in the Backpack Program as a 3-5 year old. Preliminary results support this same outcome.