

**Press Release  
From the Office of  
State Representative  
Gale D. Candaras**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CANDARAS OFFICIATES GRAND OPENING OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS  
EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER**

**SPRINGFIELD, MA – September 30, 2005** -- Representative Gale D. Candaras (D-Wilbraham) performed the official ribbon cutting ceremony at the grand opening of the Western Massachusetts Early Childhood Resource Center in downtown Springfield this afternoon.

Housed by the Preschool Enrichment Team, a non-profit early childhood consultation, training, information and referral agency, the Resource Center is available to early education and care teachers as well as parents who may wish to borrow materials to use with young children. Patricia L. Wise, executive director of the Preschool Enrichment Team said, "It is our hope that the Western Massachusetts Early Childhood Resource Center will be a beehive of activity, with early childhood teachers, directors and parents borrowing, lending, sharing and growing. It is here to enhance the quality of early education and care for all young children in Western Mass."

The Preschool Enrichment Team's services focus on improving and enriching early education and care environments for young children through on-site consulting, workshops and conferences, workforce development, technical assistance and information for child care providers and information and referrals for parents seeking early care and education programs for their children.

Funding for the Center is through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. Representative Candaras supported the enactment of the bill creating the Department of Early Education and Care, which serves as the lead agency for the administration of all public and private early education and care programs and services in Massachusetts. The legislation also created the Board of Early Education and Care, commissioned to oversee the development and implementation of a program of voluntary, universally accessible high-quality early childhood education for all preschool-aged children. As a result of her efforts, funding for the Department of Early Education and Care was also enhanced for fiscal year 2006.

"I am delighted to celebrate this wonderful day with the Preschool Enrichment Team and to reaffirm the legislature's commitment to providing high-quality early childhood education for all of the Commonwealth's children by the end of the decade," Candaras said.